THE UK'S BEST SELLING TATTOO MAGAZINE

GET INK! IT'S THE LAW

Skin Deep



FACES OF THE FUTURE? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

WIN WEEKEND TICKETS TO TATTOO FREEZE

SCENES FROM: LIVERPOOL TATTOO CONVENTION

SZCZECIN TATTOO CONVENTION

THE SEARCH FOR THE GRAIL
ARON DUBOIS

JAPANESE WHISPERS
TOMO

THE RULEBREAKER
ESTHER GARCIA

LUKE ASHLEY
PALM TATTOOS ARE OFFICIALLY HERE!

SEAN HERMAN'S
TRANSFORMATIVE TATTOO

FELIX LEU
HIS LIFE & TIMES



9 770966 435062 01

ISSUE 310 · JANUARY 2020 · £3.95

MODEL: **TETA-MARIA** · PHOTOGRAPH: **SCOTT COLE**

DERMALIZE®

PROTECTIVE TATTOO FILM

#protectyourart





...is **not** the **same!**

The only tattoo medicament approved by the Ministry of Health

www.dermalizepro.com - info@dermalizepro.com

treativa.com

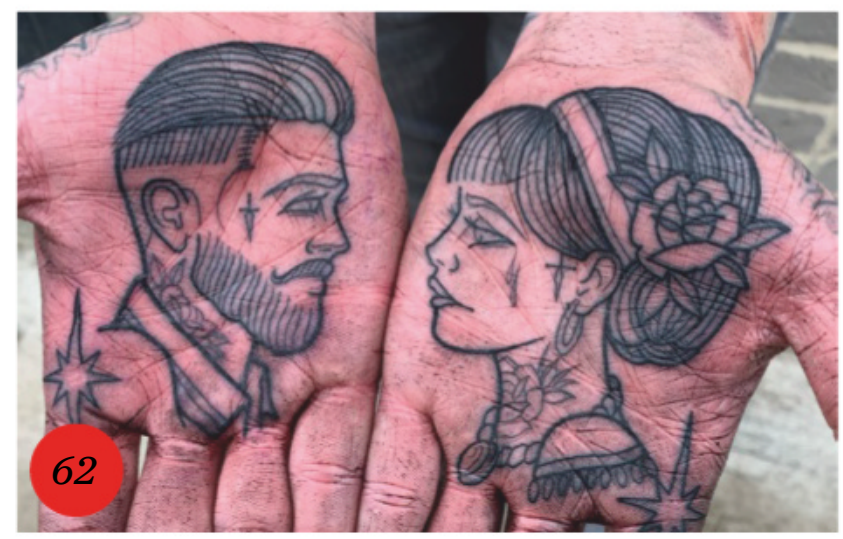
CONTENTS











20 FACES OF THE FUTURE
The distance between the present and future in tattoo appears as though it is receding. Imagining the future today could easily become an antiquated idea tomorrow, and that's what makes Faces of the Future a unique and bold attempt to document the boundaries of our imagination today.
Developed by tattoo artist, Hanumantra, and photographer, Kaja Gwinsca, we take a closer look.

30 ASK HERE (PART 1)
With the release of Tattooing Ask Here—a collection of original and traditional flash, interview, stories and photographs detailing the tattoo history of Felix Leu—we took the spectacularly well-timed opportunity to speak to Loretta Leu about the book and her life with Felix.

38 RULE BREAKER
Esther Garcia plays by her own rules — she always has and always will. Even with two decades of experience, the Chicago-based artist still finds ways to push herself and innovate.

44 JAPANESE WHISPERS
He is one of the most gifted Japanese tattooers of his generation. From the region of Niigata in the North-East of Japan, he's spreading the beauty of Japanese tattoo culture. All tattoo lovers praise his complex and very detailed compositions which adorn the bodies of some very lucky collectors, but after 20 years, Tomo is ready to move on.

62 PALM READER
For centuries we have looked to our palms as a valuable source of information, a complex blueprint of one's identity, both physical and spiritual. The latter has seen the palm as a bodily map for instigating premonitions, with its many criss-crossing lines foretelling either a joyful life or a foredooming resolution...

72 THE ETERNAL RIVER
Through impact-laden encounters between ornamental and figural imagery, tattooist Aron Dubois has developed a self-sourced visual language that openly explores symbology, spirituality and surrealism in an effort to "drink from the eternal river" and return to what the Colorado-native defines as "the source"...

80 THE TRANSFORMATIVE TATTOO
Sean Herman continues his quest to heal as much of the world as he can through tattooing—this issue, he looks at the differing version of right and wrong.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS
5 SATURDAY NIGHT & SUNDAY MORNING
8 WOMAN IN THE WOODS
10 SLEEVE NOTES
114 TATTOO OF THE MONTH

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS
Pascal Bagot
Kamila Burzymowska
Rebecca Givens
Steven Guichard-Kenny
Sean Herman
Fareed Kaviani
James Musker
Barbara Pavone

COVER PHOTOGRAPH
Scott Cole

EDITOR
Sion Smith
editor@skindeep.co.uk
07841 999334

DESIGN
David Gamble
davidgamble@mac.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES
magazines@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Justine Hart
production@skindeep.co.uk
01244 881888

CREDIT CONTROL
Emma McCrindle
accounts@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 886009

ADMINISTRATION
Jan Schofield
jan@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 886019

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Holly Vicary
holly@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 886022

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
David Arthur
david.arthur@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

EVENTS DIRECTOR
Shelley Bond
shelley@jazzevents.co.uk
01244 881888

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Stuart Mears
stuart@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

DISTRIBUTION
Susan Saunders
susan.saunders@seymour.co.uk
0207 429 4073

ISSN 0966-4351
Can't find Skin Deep magazine in your newsagent?

Please contact our distribution company for your nearest outlet 0207 429 4073

Printed by
Precision Colour Printing Ltd

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C008161
www.fsc.org

Jazz Publishing • The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ • Tel: 01244 881888 • www.jazzpublishing.co.uk • info@jazzpublishing.co.uk

The views expressed in this magazine by the contributors are not necessarily those of the publishers. All articles are written in good faith and are based on information provided by owners. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all material, the contributors, magazine and the publishers cannot accept liability for loss resulting from error, mis-statement, inaccuracy, or omission contained herein. Reproduction of any matter printed or depicted in Skin Deep magazine is prohibited without prior permission. Some words, names, and designations are trademarked and are the property of the trademark holder and have only been used for identification purposes only.



Sandy Beige

Warm Beige

Dusky Mauve

Bright Fawn

Dark Chestnut

Natural Fawn

Light Chestnut

ANDREA AFFERNI

Eternal Ink
Bringing You The Brightest Colors Period

10 COLOR INK SET

The Andrea Afferni Portrait Set is an essential set of subtle flesh tones. The range of skin tones will help soften transitions from light to shadowed flesh without losing the vitality of life in your art. Added to an existing ink palette, these 10 inks provide an ideal foundation for portraits, figures and pin-ups.

AA01 Natural Fawn	AA02 Bright Fawn	AA03 Sandy Beige	AA04 Warm Beige	AA05 Pale Mauve	AA06 Dusky Mauve	AA07 Light Chestnut	AA08 Medium Chestnut	AA09 Dark Chestnut	AA10 Triple Black

STERILE R

VEGAN

NO ANIMAL TESTING

MADE WITH NATURAL PIGMENTS

@eternalink | www.eternaltattooink.com | Eternal Ink is used exclusively in the best tattoo studios worldwide.

1657ETS_10.19



Belly Button

I'm a celebrity. Get me some ink.

I never thought I'd be mentioning these names in Skin Deep—never mind in my editorial—but I've eaten all my spinach, cracked my knuckles and I think I can handle it from here on.

Ant and Dec.

Yeah—the power-house duo of British TV get an honourable mention this issue for 'services' to tattooing. More specifically Ant...

I stumbled across a news story that revealed an outpouring of curiosity from his fans about the tattoos suddenly on public display. I don't watch TV a whole lot but I know of his work and so far as I recall, he's mostly always wearing a suit, so they may not exactly be as new as the newspapers are making out–which I think is brilliant.

AS AN ART AND COMMUNITY, WE HAVE COME A VERY LONG WAY IN THE ACCEPTANCE STAKES AND THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE IS CRUCIAL



SION SMITH · EDITOR
editor@skindeep.co.uk

Regardless, this week, his forearms made an appearance and revealed an arrow and a flower (possibly a rose) along with a couple of other bits and pieces... all of which seem to be Ant's way of helping himself deal with his demons.



Without going down the road of digging into what those demons are/were, it's great to see a guy in the public eye 24/7 using tattooing to help himself out of a hole. When you're into tattooing and the various scenes around it, you can get used to such things very quickly. I could name dozens upon dozens of people who have been tattooed as a self-healing process and so could you if you thought about it. It's not something we think about a whole lot any more because it's so common in the inner circles.

But as an art and community, we have come a Very Long Way in the acceptance stakes and this particular instance is crucial.

Ant McPartlin is right up there when it comes to pop culture and visibility—the more visibly tattooed people, who are loved by the majority of the population, the better. It has huge repercussions when it comes to getting jobs and acceptance in society. The 'shock the readers' news stories are getting thin for the daily papers. Once it was a valuable tool for them and people had views on it almost at the level of climate change/political loyalty... not so much any more.

I'm sticking this in the win column for us simply because tattoos are starting to become 'invisible' for the non-tattooed out there. For too long, they seemed to belong to everybody else as well as yourself–everybody and their dog had an opinion–but that's changing on a daily basis and before too long, ownership will come back to the wearer.

Which is where it should always have been.

Do we want a level playing field? That's a tough one to answer because not all tattooed people are the same. Far from it in fact, but it's the way the mass media likes to play everything. Us and Them. Some will hate it because their reasons for getting tattooed were to set them apart and now they are not. Some will love it because that stigma is still out there in little pockets which can make getting by in daily life difficult.

Blurred lines are the answer to everything. The blurrier the better because it means compromise and acceptance. Being part of the bigger picture has never been at the top of any list when it comes to tattooing but the world has changed beyond all recognition in recent years and none of us, no matter how hard we try, will ever get that genie back in the bottle.



Belly Button

...IT LOOKS SO DAMN FINE, I DON'T SEE HOW ANYBODY COULD EVER SAY IT WASN'T A LEGITIMATE ART-FORM

I still think tattooing will go underground again before too long, but there will be a more visible split between 'types' of tattooers and what they do. Much as you can go into a shop and buy a watch, a phone, a pair of shoes–whatever–there are certain watches, phones and shoes that you just can't get on the high street.

For those top end luxury items, you'll need to look a little harder, do a little research and move beyond the confines of your comfort zone to get them. That's where we are heading.

One look at the Faces of the Future article we have on board this issue, will give you a good indication of where top end tattooing is going and it looks so damn fine, I don't see how anybody could ever say it wasn't a legitimate art-form.

If they do, it's merely a lack of understanding.

I seem to have gotten off-track here. How do you move from a simple arrow on the forearm tattoo to mind-blowing full body pieces in less than 800 words?

Well... thats the secret of tattooing all over. It starts with a simple arrow, leads to a rose on the other side to balance it out and before you know it, you're back with your head in a magazine trying to figure out what you're going to get next...

Britain's Got Talent will never be the same again. ▣

For professional tattooists only!

Dermaglo

UK Limited



- Vegan friendly
- No harmful substances
- Sharper, brighter results
- Easier to work into the skin
- Faster healing than conventional colour

www.tattooingsupplies.co.uk

The worlds finest tattoo ink
Available on-line



GOOD LUCK TATTOO SUPPLY

PROTAT TATTOO SUPPLIES

EIKON

NUCLEAR TATTOO SUPPLY

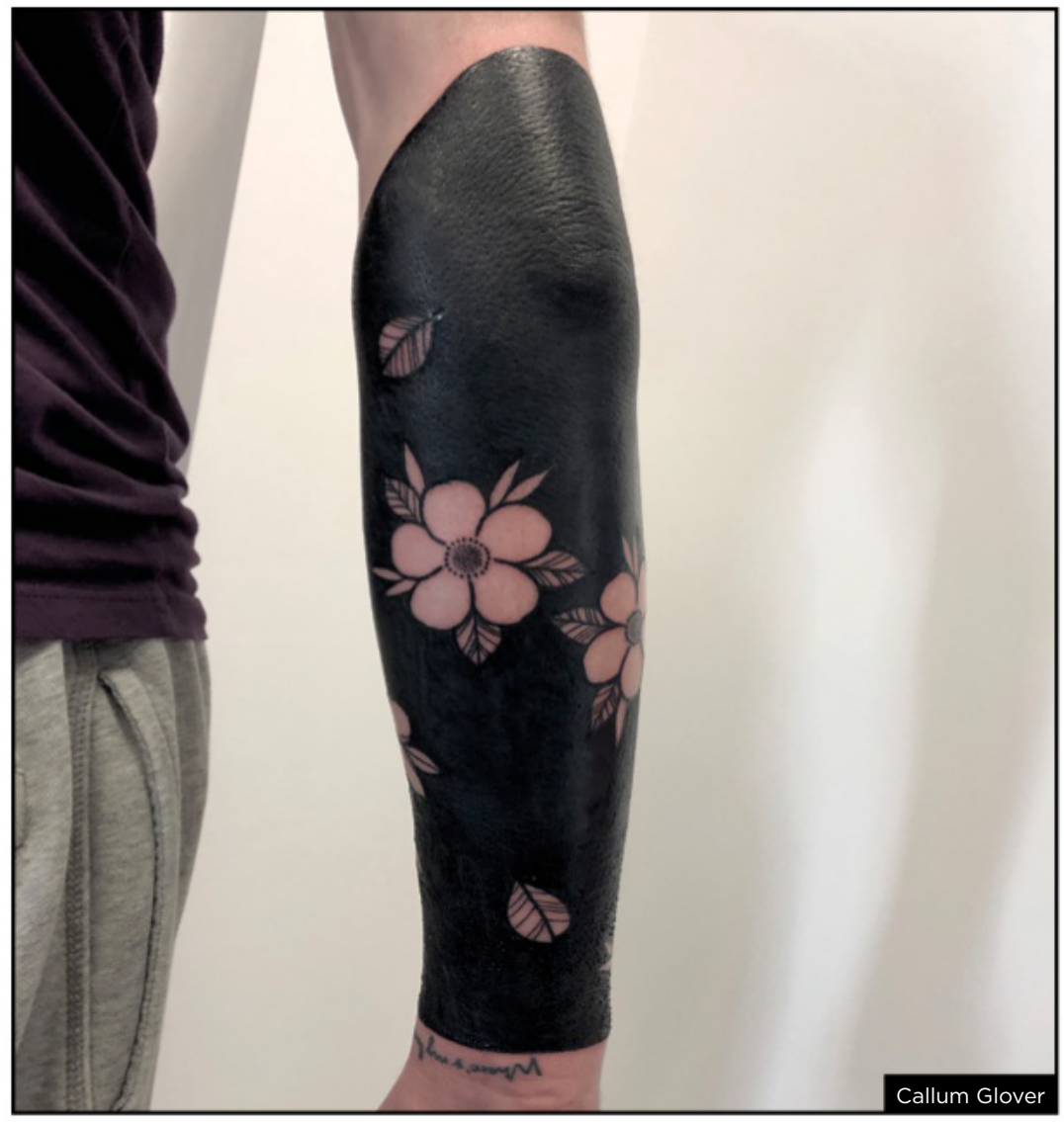
THE WOMAN IN THE WOODS

Why is that first tattoo encounter so terrifying?

I spoke to a friend last week that I hadn't seen in a while. Of course one of the primary things to fall out of his mouth was that he'd gone and gotten tattooed for the first time. When things like this happen, when people open conversations with details of their body modification, I take it to mean that I have become—in some of my less-tattooed social groups—unofficial spokesperson and sounding board for all things tattooing... ready to listen to anyone and everyone's stories. I get a real kick out of this. If you do (or don't) know me and we do cross paths, please do tell me your tattoo news. I am always honoured to hear it.

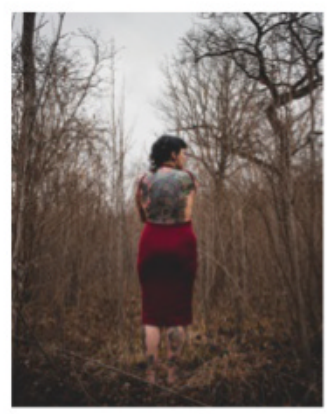
Anyway, he went on to explain how his first time in that sweat-inducing, cling-film-covered black chair was "terrifying" and that being in a tattoo studio for the first time was "intimidating". Knowing that he'd been to one of my favourite places in the Midlands, somewhere I knew prided itself on an ability to be friendly, especially to newbies, I asked him to detail exactly what it was that had made him feel out-of-place. "Did they welcome you with a smile? Say hello? Offer you a drink? Talk you through the tattoo beforehand?" "Yes," was his response to every scenario I could think of. So, what exactly was it that had made him feel so apprehensive about going in there for that first appointment?

He couldn't give me an answer. We then went on to have a lengthy chat about why it is that, no matter how comfortable you are made to feel, there is something about getting that very first tattoo that will always make you feel a little bit sick when you walk through the door. It doesn't matter what your pre-conceptions are about tattooed people and their environments, it doesn't matter how jolly and un-patronising the receptionist is, maybe you're just always going to walk towards that chair and experience the sensation of thinking you may shit your pants. Maybe you will, actually, shit your pants. I guess a lot of the fear has to do with 'the unknown'—no matter how much you prepare someone for that day, no matter how much we try to make our world accessible to anyone on the outside of it, it's still a really big deal to the individual. Not because people with tattoos look unapproachable, but because the decision itself has weight for the person wearing it for the rest of their life.



Callum Glover

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT GETTING THAT VERY FIRST TATTOO THAT WILL ALWAYS MAKE YOU FEEL A LITTLE BIT SICK WHEN YOU WALK THROUGH THE DOOR



REBECCA GIVENS

As tattooists and regular tattoo collectors, we're on a tattoo art treadmill, forgetting what that first ever tattoo was like and how important it really was. Sometimes I wish I could go back and re-live it, write down how it felt, what I said, how the studio smelt, what I did afterwards. I was a completely different person then. I didn't even know what 'Skin Deep' was. And now, here I am. Tattoos open so many doors—for artists and for their wearers who leave the studio a brand new version of themselves.

If you're reading this magazine today for first-timer inspiration, hey there, we don't bite. And good luck popping your tattoo cherry. Just try to enjoy it. It's true what they say—it's scary, you'll bleed, you'll shake, you'll sweat, and then afterwards you'll smile, and you'll never be the same again. ▣

Clara Lupino

BESPOKE TATTOOS

Wear your heart on your sleeve and declare your soul secrets by having Clara Lupino work her magic in your skin.

With a first class hons degree and decades of experience, Clara is an exceptional freehand artist who tattoos using vegan inks to the contours of your body to create unique, stunning tattoos.

With no need of stencils, Clara's corrective freehand cover-up work can incorporate skin-space as she cleverly transforms your tired ink into something truly beautiful.

Clara also offers a "LIVING PORTRAIT" service - including permanent eyebrows, 3-D effect nipples, scar camouflage & scalp pigmentation.



APPRENTICESHIPS

2 week one-to-one intensive Tattoo Apprenticeship courses available.

Health registered studio in Hebden Bridge. by appointment only. Contact Clara to discuss your ideas.

T:07757655061 E:**claralupinoarts@gmail.com**

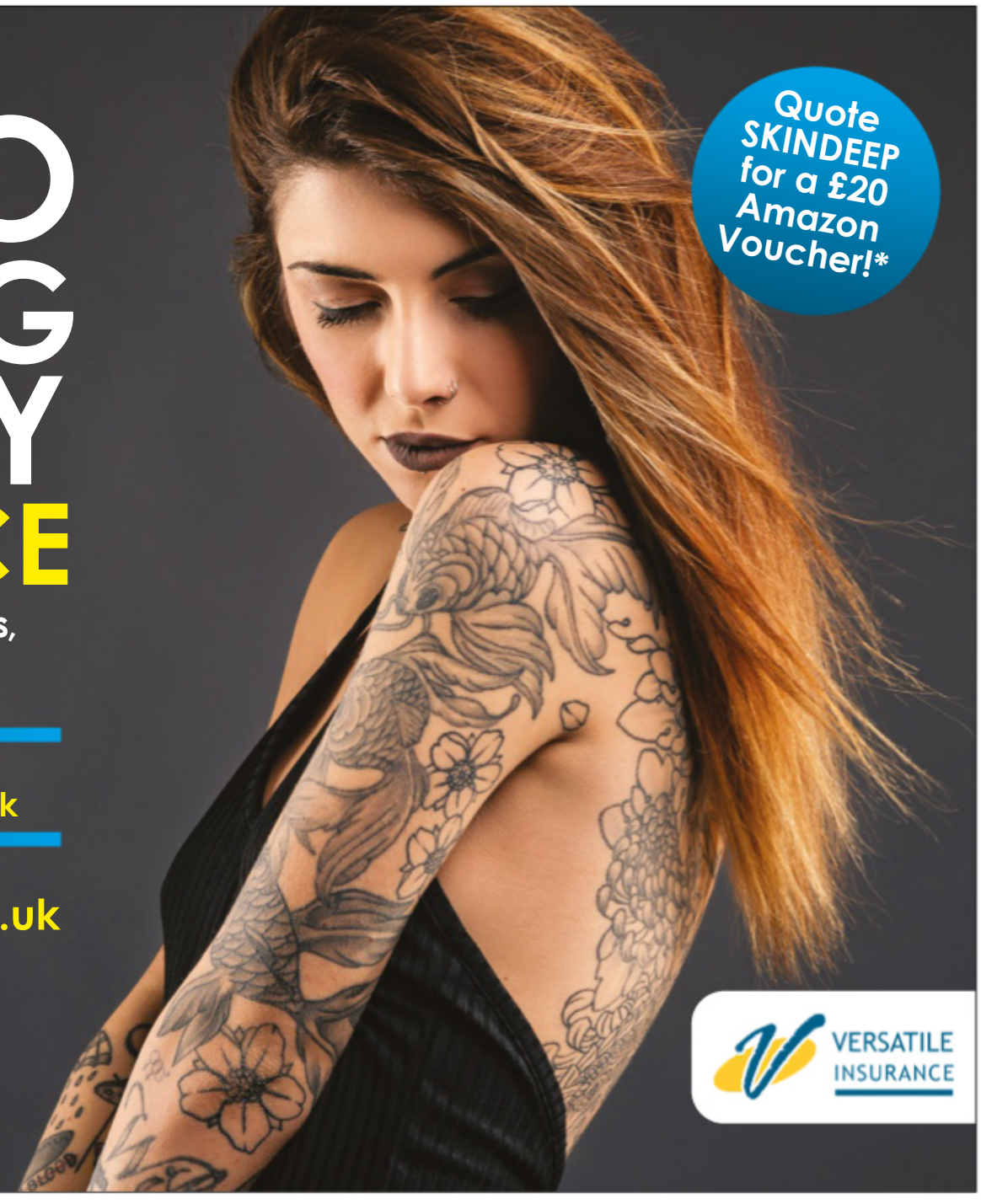
www.claralupino.com

TATTOO PIERCING & BEAUTY INSURANCE

Specialist insurance for Tattoo Artists, Body Piercers & a wide range of advanced Beauty Treatments

Call 01837 658955
Email info@versatileinsurance.co.uk

Or visit
www.versatileinsurance.co.uk
@versatile_insurance



Quote SKINDEEP for a £20 Amazon Voucher!*

VERSATILE INSURANCE

*New customers only. Amazon Vouchers will be provided 3 weeks after you buy a policy. Versatile Insurance Professionals Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

ALL SUBMISSIONS TO SLEEVE NOTES GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. BE IT NEWS, AN EVENT, NEW MERCH, A STUDIO MOVE... WE'LL DO OUR VERY BEST TO LET EVERYBODY ELSE KNOW ABOUT IT TOO. EMAIL: ***NEWS@SKINDEEP.CO.UK*** OR IF YOU WANT TO BE ARCHAIC ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR: SKIN DEEP, THE OLD SCHOOL, HIGHER KINNERTON, CHESTER CH4 9AJ. BRING IT.

twitter.com/skindeepmag www.facebook.com/tattoomagazine







WIN ONE OF FIVE PAIRS OF TICKETS TO TATTOO FREEZE 2020

2019 sure flipped by in the blink of an eye huh? Here we are staring down the barrel of Christmas which means Tattoo Freeze will be here before you've even finished your shopping.

The weeks sure do fly by but if you want to impress the guy who works at the supermarket or the girl who you think might be looking at you fondly from behind the fish counter, it's likely that some free tickets to one of the years most fun tattoo shows will push you a little further in the right direction.

We haven't given anything away for a long time (aside from last issue) so here we are with another fistful (five pairs to be exact) of tickets for the entire weekend at Tattoo Freeze (February 1st/2nd, Telford International Centre).

All you have to do is head on over to skindeep.co.uk/competitions and where it asks for your competition answer, simply type TATTOO FREEZE, fill in the other important stuff and we'll choose the next five winners before the end of December.

Will we run another giveaway for it between now and the event? Nope... best get typing.











MR & MISS ALTERNATIVE 2019

After touring six U.K locations throughout 2019, the Alternative Model of the Year contest reached an extravagant finale on Saturday October 19th at Newcastle's Northumbria Students Union, showcasing some of nations most unique and vibrant individuals.

The event featured on BBC's Travel Show earlier this year and recently celebrated its 8th anniversary, which over the years has seen an impressive 2,400 models participate in the pageant. Since launching in 2011 organisers have been pushing the boundaries of what is considered "the norm" in the modelling industry, promoting diversity in the world of fashion.

Taking to the runway and beating the competition of 165 other hopefuls; Shelby Toms from Newcastle was crowned Miss Alternative, and Killian Main from London took the title Mr Alternative.

Both winners have secured modelling contract with Rogue Model Management and will participate in an exclusive photo-shoot with the Legendary; Dani Divine.

If you're feeling adventurous, applications are now being taken for 2020 at: *www.alternativemodelling.com*



Images credit: Jamie Huntley

TATTOO FREEZE 20 20



200+ TATTOO ARTISTS • INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT • CIRCUS WORKSHOPS • LIVE MUSIC •

TATTOO FREEZE

1ST-2ND FEBRUARY 2020
TELFORD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



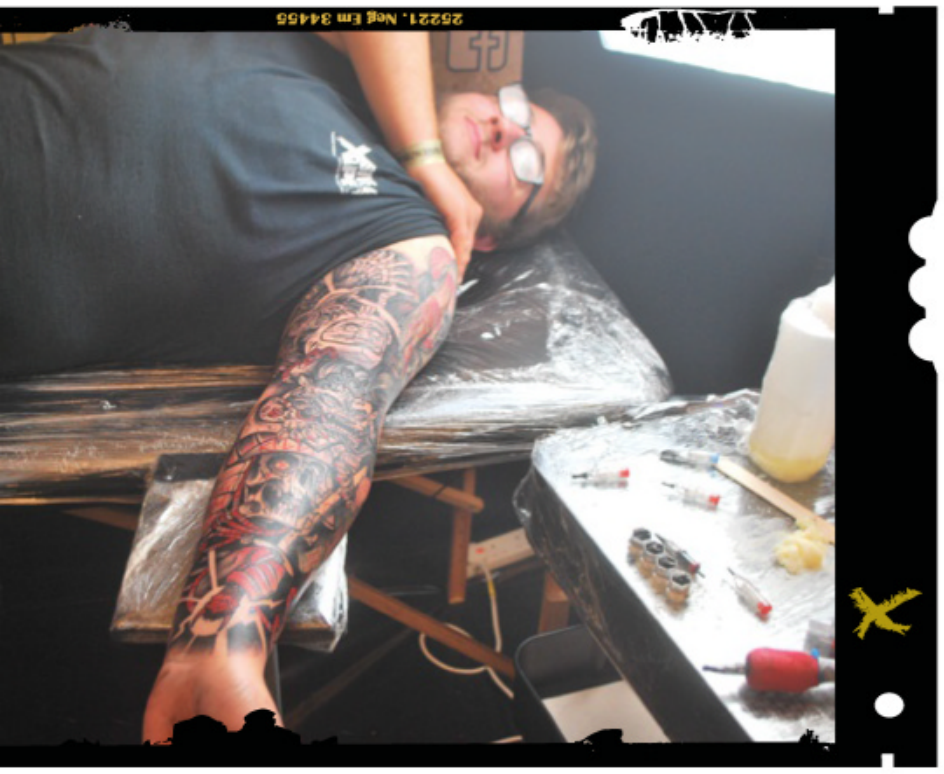




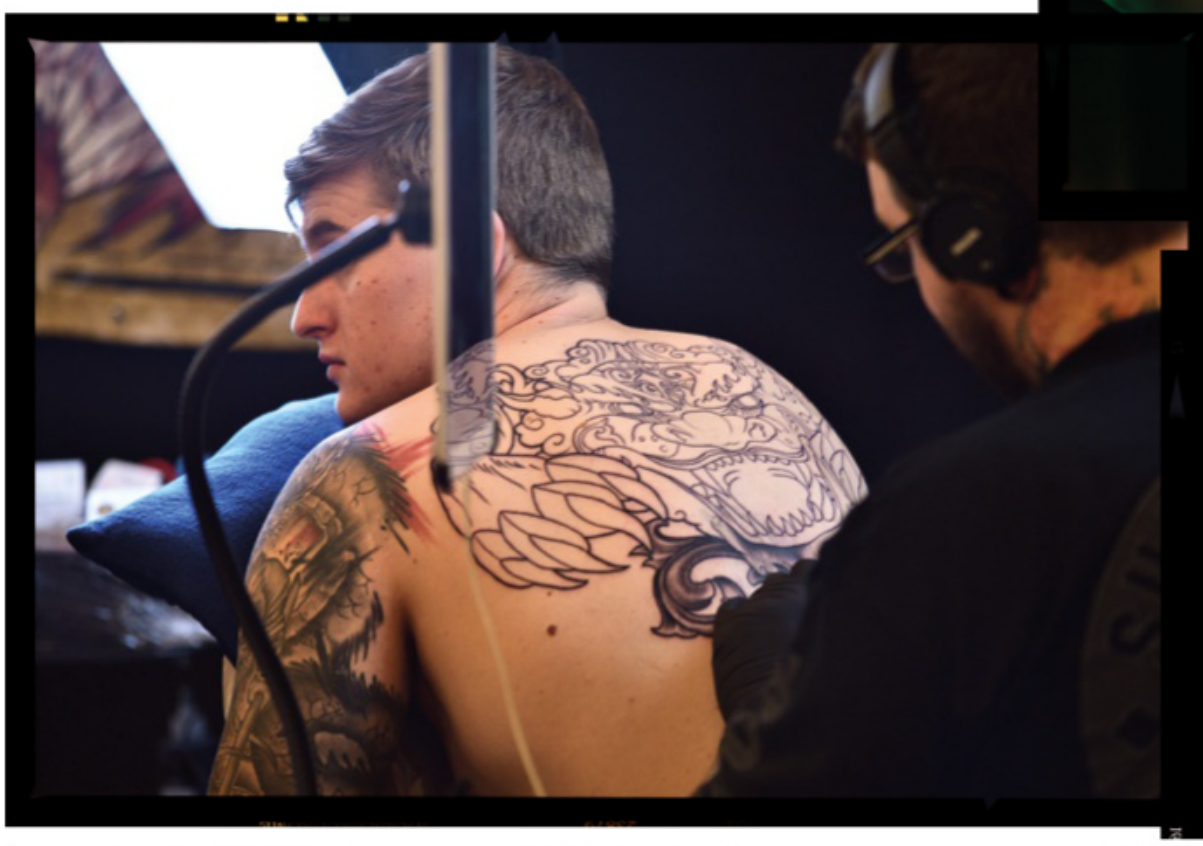


• BURLESQUE • AMAZING TRADERS

WWW.TATTOOFREEZE.COM


25221. Neg Em 34455

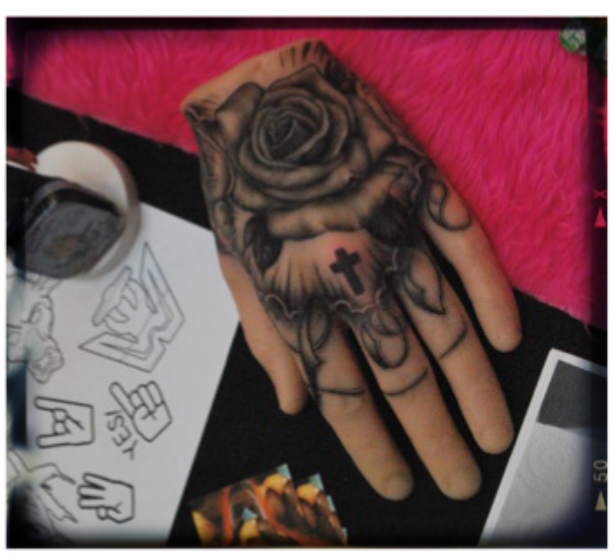




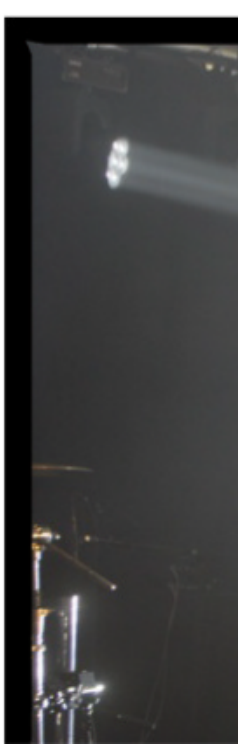


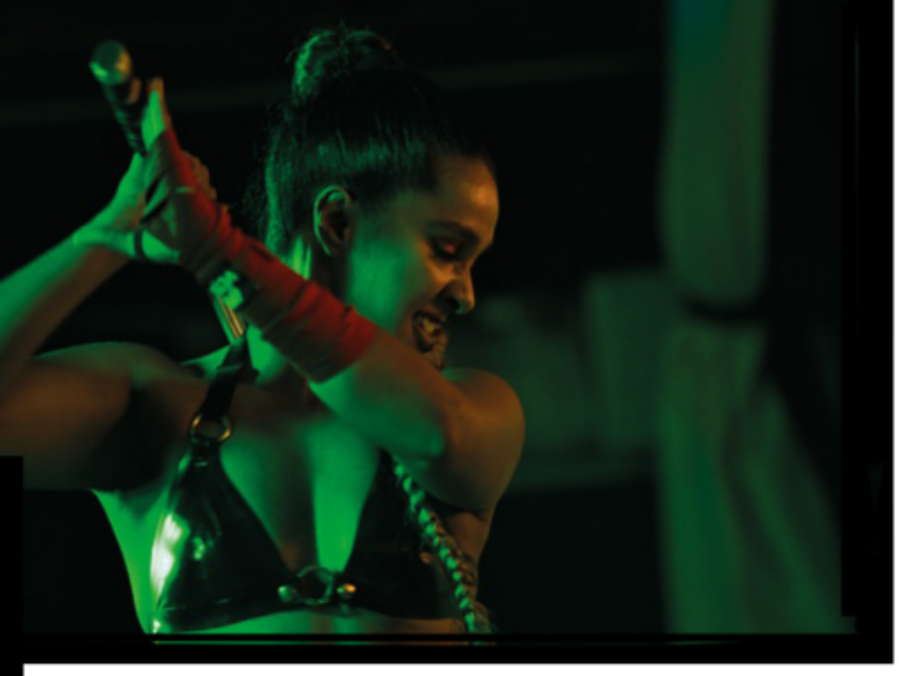



25221. Neg Em 34455

















Scenes from LIVERPOOL TATTOO CONVENTION



The 12th International Liverpool Tattoo Convention comes later than usual this year, but it's great to see it's still part of the inked calendar. I've always found tattoo conventions strange to be honest–and that doesn't mean 'not great' or 'rubbish'.

See, I love fresh bread and beer, but I have no desire to see anyone baking or brewing but that doesn't mean I can't appreciate the process and the glorious finished product.

However, LTC is different, always has been, always will be. Why? Simple. The differential between tattooing and lifestyle! The multi layered aspects of whats involved. For a start, the organisers live that lifestyle of tattoos, music, clothing, jewellery, art, films, books, magazines, love, life... people damnit!

The venue is a hotel and this means there are several spaces with things going on.

Two main rooms are full of those delivering/getting ink featuring 200+ tattooists from all over the UK and beyond, including some hot names right now in the shape of people like Dave Valentine, Bex Priest, Gillian Badger alongside of some old friends like Max Pniewski and Rakhee Shah. Indeed, this years line-up is a damn consistent affair and that's good to see.

Smaller side rooms, a basement, a loft, a music bar and vendors fill the rest of the space. The fact that it's in the city centre means right outside the front door is one of the greatest cities in the world. You're never bored that's for sure, there is always something to do, especially

Words: JJ **Images:** 2 Tall Paul







with the show running from midday way to way past midnight.

On the entertainment front, we have a stage full of horror themes, burlesque, sword swallowing and the #1 Suicide Girl. It's often just as fun to watch the reaction of those watching as those performing. Most of those gracing the stage are inked, so the connection is made, all hang around to chat and have a selfie. The line between them and us is blurred and that's just as it should be, 'I am you and you are me and we are all together' Coo, coo, ca choo.

Meanwhile, fifteen artists are playing live down in the music bar. Most, if not all are 'live and local'. Some are great, some are not so. Those that certainly left an impression are Munkey Junkey, Oceanis, Inhabit, Scare Tactics, Celavi and the Spouky Kids who are a Marilyn Manson tribute act who certainly go all the way. Once again it's subjective, those mentioned are the ones for me that have a chance of doing something great should they wish to and I'm not going to berate others, just going to say that they were not for me, or not at the same level as those mentioned. Anyway, so far as music goes at a tattoo convention, this was a great addition to the inking going on elsewhere.

To sum up three days and nights in a short review is kind of trivialising the event, then again, to drag a review over pages of self absorbing breakdown would still make the end result a bloody great weekend.

Same time next year? You bet.

JJ




















25221. Neg Em 34455

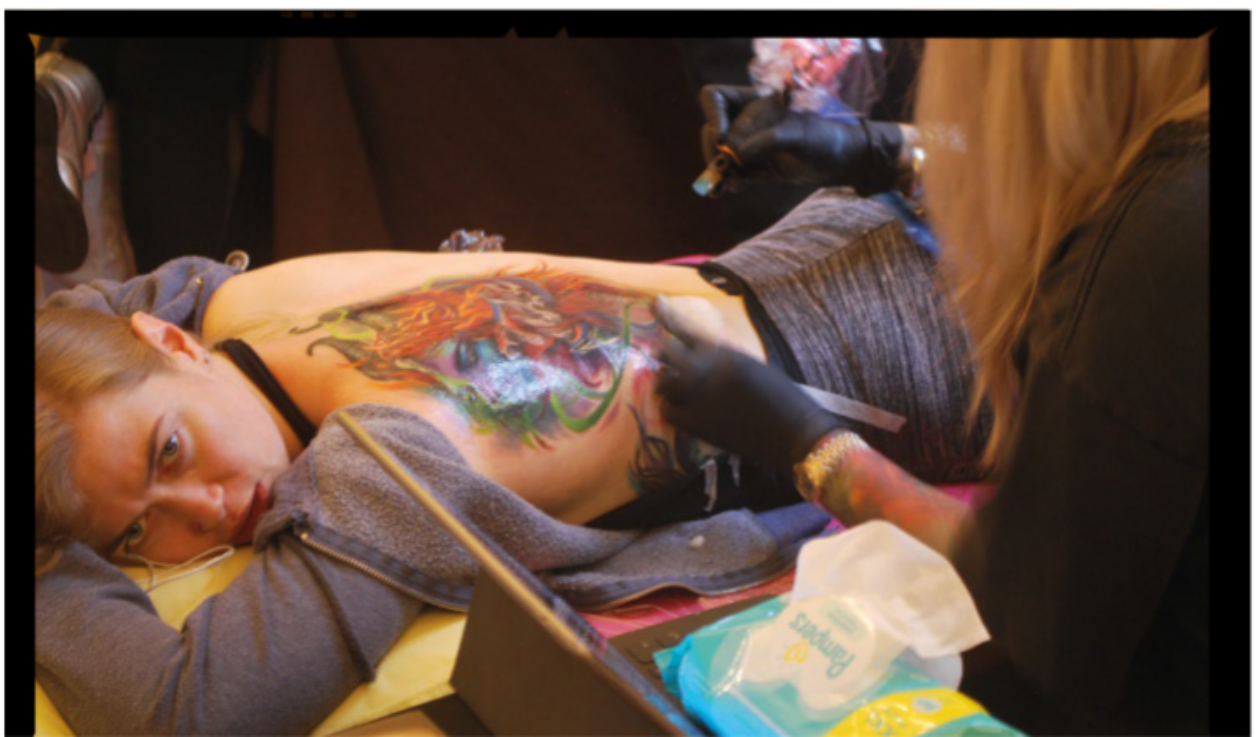


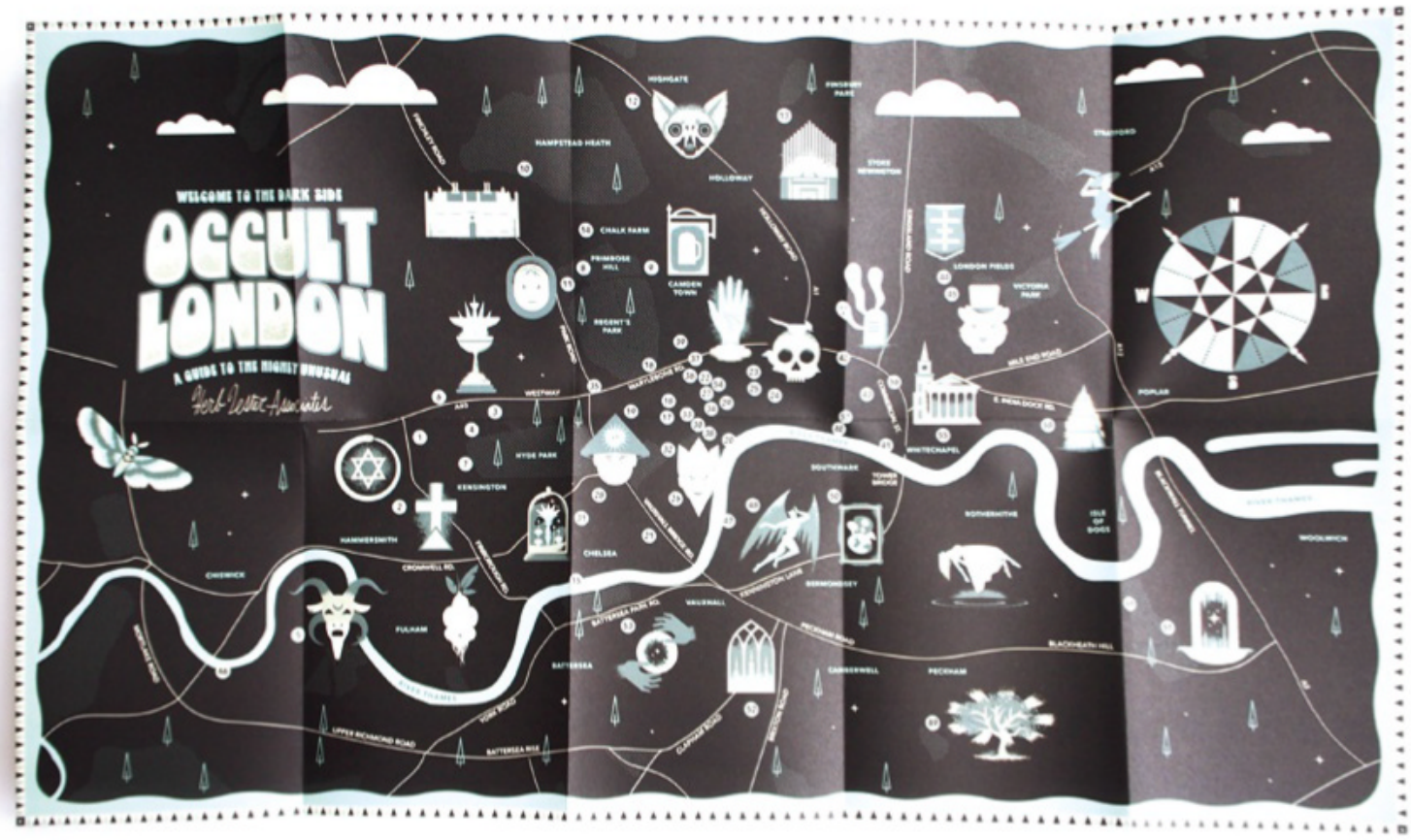

NATURAL BEARD CARE
& STREETWEAR




25221. Neg Em 34455







Here's a couple of great little curios. Herb Lester publish some bizarre material—weird, but still brilliant in every way.

In the mail today, we received two little packages—'Occult London' and 'Cults'—and they're fantastically fun, which is no mean feat while the rest of the world is playing it deadly serious.

Open the killer packaging and in one, you'll find a super-cool double-sided map of occult London landmarks along with a postcard detailing 20 items any aspiring occultist needs to get started—in the other, the two-sided map is of the locations of the worlds most insane cults along with a postcard you can use to tell your family you've either joined a cult... or need some help. Most interesting about this, is that the majority of the world's most dangerous cults appear to be in Southern California—make of it what you will.

While neither pack is anything related





to tattooing at all, a huge percentage of you are into art in many forms and these are a peach—thus, we deemed them worthy of inclusion here just because they're cool as hell and once you frame them and stick them up on the wall, who knows what they might influence you to create.

And if you think these are strange, check out their online store where they have many, many ways for you to get rid of some cash and not feel like you threw it away on nothing. When something raises a smile on your face just because it exists, you know you're onto a good thing. ▣



OCCULT LONDON

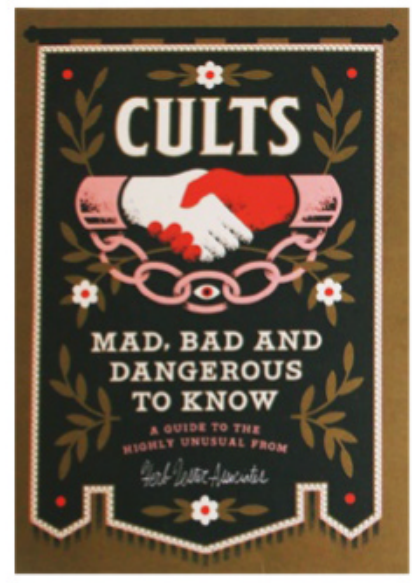
9-781999-343934
£12.00
Folder contains: Map (400 x 690mm), A Guide To Magickal Tools For The Aspiring Occultist card (100 x138mm)
Litho-printed in the UK on sustainably sourced paper



CULTS

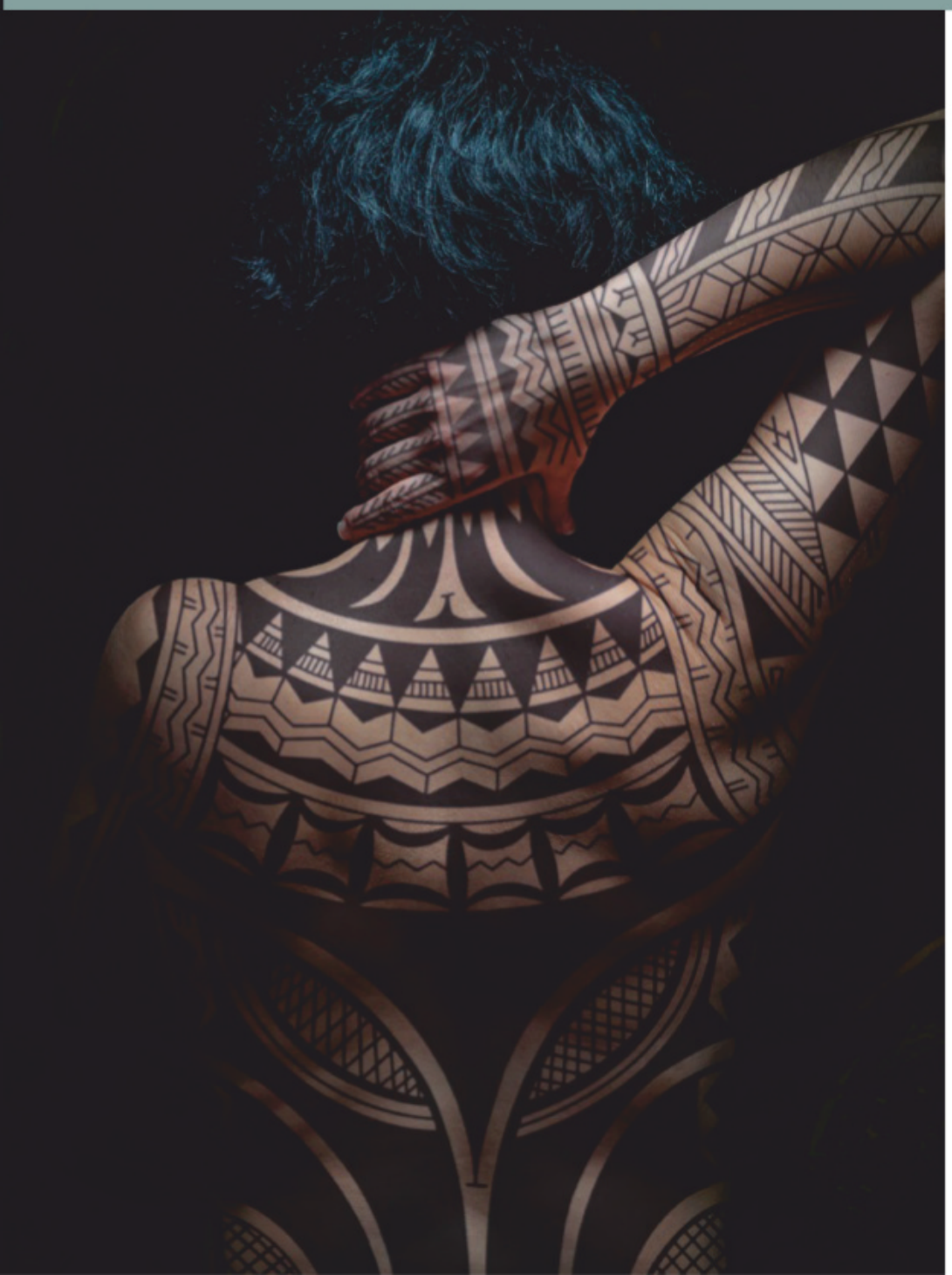
9-781999-343903
£12.00
Folder contains: Map (400 x 690mm), two postcards (100 x138mm)
Litho-printed in the UK on sustainably sourced paper

Published by: Herb Lester Associates · herblester.com





FACES OF THE FUTURE



With the onslaught of social media these ground-breaking moments have become more frequent, occurring on an almost weekly basis—depending on the quality of your feed—yet, moments that break new ground have also become as ephemeral as a refresh button; just yesterday I was spellbound by Jaya Suartika's innovative placement of an Indonesian batik keris design on (and it would seem also, in) Paul Stillen's backside.

The distance between the present and future in tattoo appears as though it is receding. Imagining the future today could easily become an antiquated idea tomorrow, and that's what makes Faces of the Future a unique and bold attempt to document the boundaries of our imagination today. Developed by tattoo artist, Hanumantra, and photographer, Kaja Gwinsca, the concept brings together visions of the future of tattoo artists they respect and admire. I catch up with Hanumantra to discover more about the project.

What prompted the project / why did you create it?

In my early years and pre today's technology, I spent copious amounts of time traveling, which exposed me to a lot of 'dead time'. To fill the hours, I would constantly doodle designs using a Bic ballpoint pen in magazines, working up designs that I thought could work as tattoos. The more I did the more interesting this concept of drawing on pic-



I WANTED A TRUE REPRESENTATION OF WHERE THEY CURRENTLY ARE BUT ALSO WHERE THEY MAY BE HEADING CREATIVELY

tures became, I realised that without the restriction and expectation that comes with actual tattoos I was free to develop my work at will, I was able to have fun where the consequence for error was nil. As a freehand tattooist, this approach allowed me to truly develop an aesthetic to my tattoos that I felt comfortable with.

With this concept in mind I thought it would be fun to see what other creations could come from others in the industry, so I reached out to a few friends to see if they would be interested in a collaboration in freedom of expression to share and inspire others in the industry. What has been truly great for me is this project has given me the chance to work with people I greatly respect and admire, people pushing their work and influencing tattooing in their own way and allowing me the opportunity to share this with the wider public

What criteria did you select the artists by?

It varied, some because they have not only inspired me so much but also altered the vision of tattooing such as “Leo Zulueta”, others because they are creating the tattoos that are having a big impact on the tattoos being done today and then those who will hopefully carry the torch forward. The response from the artists has been fantastic, and since the project has been launched, I have been inundated with



WHILST I APPRECIATE MANY OTHER FACETS OF TATTOOING, NONE OF THEM EXCITES AND INTERESTS ME THE WAY BLACKWORK DOES

requests from people who would like to contribute.

How are the tattoos created—what is the technical process?

Each artist was assigned a unique picture to work on. This was chosen to complement their already established aesthetic within tattooing. I wanted a true representation of where they currently are but also where they may be heading creatively. They created the design "off" the picture and sent it back to me where I would then superimpose the tattoo on to the model.

Why did you choose only blackwork?

I work exclusively in this genre and whilst I appreciate many other facets of tattooing, none of them excites and interests me the way blackwork does. I also think this type of tattooing lends itself to large scale work with an acute focus on fitting the design to a person's body. It's in this way I'd like to see the craft of tattooing evolve.

Can you briefly tell me about your own work?

My work has its roots firmly planted in the history of indigenous "tribal" tattooing. However, I do not try and replicate these designs or the cultural significance they have. Instead, I take the principals and concepts used from the past and project them into how I see the future of blackwork tattooing progressing. This is what I create for my clients today.

What criteria did you select the models by? Any issues / surprises with the whole process?

I had the help of Kaja Gwinsca, who photographed all





I'D REALLY LIKE TO SEE A MORE DELIBERATE APPROACH TO LARGE SCALE FULL-BODY TATTOOING

of the models as well as finding them. When we had our initial discussion about who the models should be, we agreed on an inclusive selection of sex, age, colour, body type etc, as we want everyone in our future.

Can you describe some of the pieces for us? Any stand-out pieces?

Too many of the designs that came back made me think "holy shit", which inspired me to push harder with my own work. What I did find surprising was some of the words that accompanied the artwork from various artists. It gave a really interesting insight into their influences and methodology for creating a tattoo. I included some of these words in the book "Faces of the Future".

What was the brief you sent to artists? I am interested in any limitations that might have arisen from your definitions of the "future", "tattoo" and "body".

Each person was tasked with creating the most progressive version of their work whilst remaining true to what they do. I am not aware of any limitations that occurred in my brief, I just wanted people to feel free and design something that excited them without the logistics of having to actually "tattoo" it. Hopefully, they all enjoyed it.

In your eyes, what makes a tattoo "futuristic"?

The answer will vary for every person, but for me I'd really like to see a more deliberate approach to large scale full-body tattooing. This is the pinnacle and I believe we should aim for the top. ▣

The "Faces of the Future" book is available for sale from www.un1ty.tattoo.

BACKPIECES, SLEEVES & AND OTHER LARGE-SCALE TATTOOS

DISCOVERED AT SZCZECIN TATTOO CONVENTION
5–6 OCTOBER 2019

PHOTO CREDIT: KAMILA BURZYMOWSKA




28



Felix Leu in the studio at 34 Rue Centrale, Lausanne, Switzerland. 1983. Photo credit Alex Solca.

ASK HERE
PART ONE

leufamilyiron.com • seedpress.ie

With the release of Tattooing Ask Here—a collection of original and traditional flash, interviews, stories and photographs detailing the tattoo history of Felix Leu—we took the spectacularly well-timed opportunity to speak to Loretta Leu about the book and her life with Felix:

How did the idea of making this book come about?
I had started to collect some of Felix's earlier flash drawings, just knowing that one day I should do something with them. I looked through our old flash books; we didn't keep his drawings separate, they were mixed in with all our other flash. It took me some time to collect all these images. Then, my daughter Aia Leu came to visit and saw what I was collecting. She said: *"Why don't I help you and we do it again, make a book together and I'll publish it."* It is really thanks to her enthusiasm and hard work that this project came to life now. The idea from the beginning was to include Felix's tattoo designs, photos, also an early drawing like the one from 1977 which shows fantastic line work for a future tattooer. And part of the story before his tattoo life. Because tattooing didn't come into our life until we were 33. We had a whole life before that. When tattooing came to us, we already had four children and had travelled a lot; we had done many things to support ourselves, make jewellery, batiks and other different jobs of that kind. Whatever we could figure out to survive in fact. And then tattooing came into our life; I've put the story in the book. It's even in Felix's own words because we decided to quote some of the interviews that he did.

Why was it important to tell Felix's story?
I have at home a whole collection of books of tattooers from the early 20th century. I've always found it interesting to read about Charlie Wagner, Amund Dietzel, George Burchett and all these people, to know how tattooing was back then. Today, many young people and artists say to me: *"You come from this wonderful tattoo family..."* but, they don't actually know much about us, because very little has been published over the years. So that was the idea behind the book–to present Felix Leu so that younger artists know something about him. Older ones like myself could find it fun to read too, because they might have had similar experiences. And if in 50 years' time somebody is researching about tattooing in those early years, then they'll find a book about Felix and what he did.


Tattoo by Felix Leu, Lausanne, Switzerland. 1985.

You said you were initially looking for earlier flash, did Felix draw a lot even at the start of his tattoo career?
Yes, in the beginning it was one of the things that brought

Words: Pascal Bagot



The Leu Family's Family Iron Studio and Museum photographed by Neil Labrador in 2003. Located on the 3rd floor of No 34 Rue Centrale, Lausanne, Switzerland.

people to us. He drew custom flash for people in a period when not many tattooers were doing that; most were doing traditional "off the wall" flash. But Felix was an artist before he was a tattooer so he could offer this custom service. Somebody would come in with a sketch—I've put one example of this in the book—and Felix was able to draw a better version for him. I don't have much of his later flash. Most of the ones in the book are earlier ones, from the 80's to early 90's. The last part of his tattoo years Felix did a lot of freehand work where he worked directly on the skin, that's why there aren't many sketches on paper. He would just draw some main power lines on the skin with a pen and then tattoo directly with the machine.

Flash was also a way to advertise.

Yes. He said from the beginning: *"You can be the best artist in the world, but if you don't put it out there, nobody knows"*. Same for Filip. His reputation has grown by now, by word of mouth but also because we do still send out photos of his tattoos and artwork to the magazines and books. Advertising in that way is important if you do something. Otherwise, you can be great, but if nobody knows you're there and what you're doing, this doesn't help you.

The book is a great opportunity to meet a man, determined at a very early age to enjoy life and the freedom of the time...

Absolutely, that was Felix 100%. *"We only live once"*, he liked to say : "We only get one time!".

What was the trigger that made him leave his parent's house at 16 ?

Well, he didn't agree with his father's mind-set. He was a Swiss architect, conventional, bourgeois, well respected and all that. Felix was quite proud of the fact that in his rebellion he got kicked out of many schools—maybe 10—by the time he left home. The last one was even a Rudolf Steiner school, which was supposed to be very alternative and open-minded...



Felix tattooing on the veranda in Goa, India in 1979.



The Leu Family: from left to right: Felix, Aia, Ama, Filip, Loretta, Ajja. Bombay, India. 1981.

What was the reason?

He told me that in one of them he punched one of the teachers in the face (laughs). But really the trigger for Felix to leave home was when somebody gave him a copy of Jack Kerouac's book On the Road. He totally agreed with the message : *"Go out there, enjoy your life, explore and meet a lot of women and have a good time"* (laughs). Also, he had grown up with his father but his mother was a Swiss artist: Eva Aeppli, who was living in Paris at the time and had married Jean Tinguely, a Swiss sculptor. Felix visited them a few times when he was 14 or 15. Even though they weren't famous yet and living a very poor artist's life in a studio in the Montparnasse area, I think he very much appreciated their lifestyle. It inspired him, he could see there was another way.

Then he spent four years living a very beatnik lifestyle.

He told me that he had quite an education in Paris, because for some time he was living on the streets, sleeping under the bridges next to the clochards. They taught him some tricks about how to survive outside. He said that his first job was as a beggar. To him this was a very honourable profession if you did it properly, without bothering people. Don't tell them your story, don't bore them with your problems, just ask them! If they have money maybe they'll give you some, or maybe not. I know he spent some time like that, buying bread, cheese, and a bottle of the cheapest wine once he had enough change, before falling asleep somewhere, under the bridges...

Did he have any connections to help him?

His mother couldn't help very much because she didn't have anything either. He was kind of on his own. The second job that he learnt from the street people was to draw on the sidewalks. He would get a postcard of a famous painting that people would easily recognise and copy it on the sidewalk. It's also a good profession, except when it rains, right? (laughs). He told me that another way in which he learnt to survive was, because he was good looking, making friends with young American female tourists, they always had a hotel room. That night he wouldn't sleep in the streets.

How important were these four years for his personal development do you think?

They gave him a lot of the courage and strength he had throughout our life, to travel and do the things we did. He was not afraid. You can choose to starve and not have food when you're on your own, but it becomes a different story when you have children. You have to find a way. Strangely enough, he kept something from his early background, a certain way of doing things which was very Swiss-German like. Whenever he set his mind to something, he did it really well. He didn't do things half way. Whatever he did, he went for it 100%.

You meet him in New-York in 1965, what did he look like?

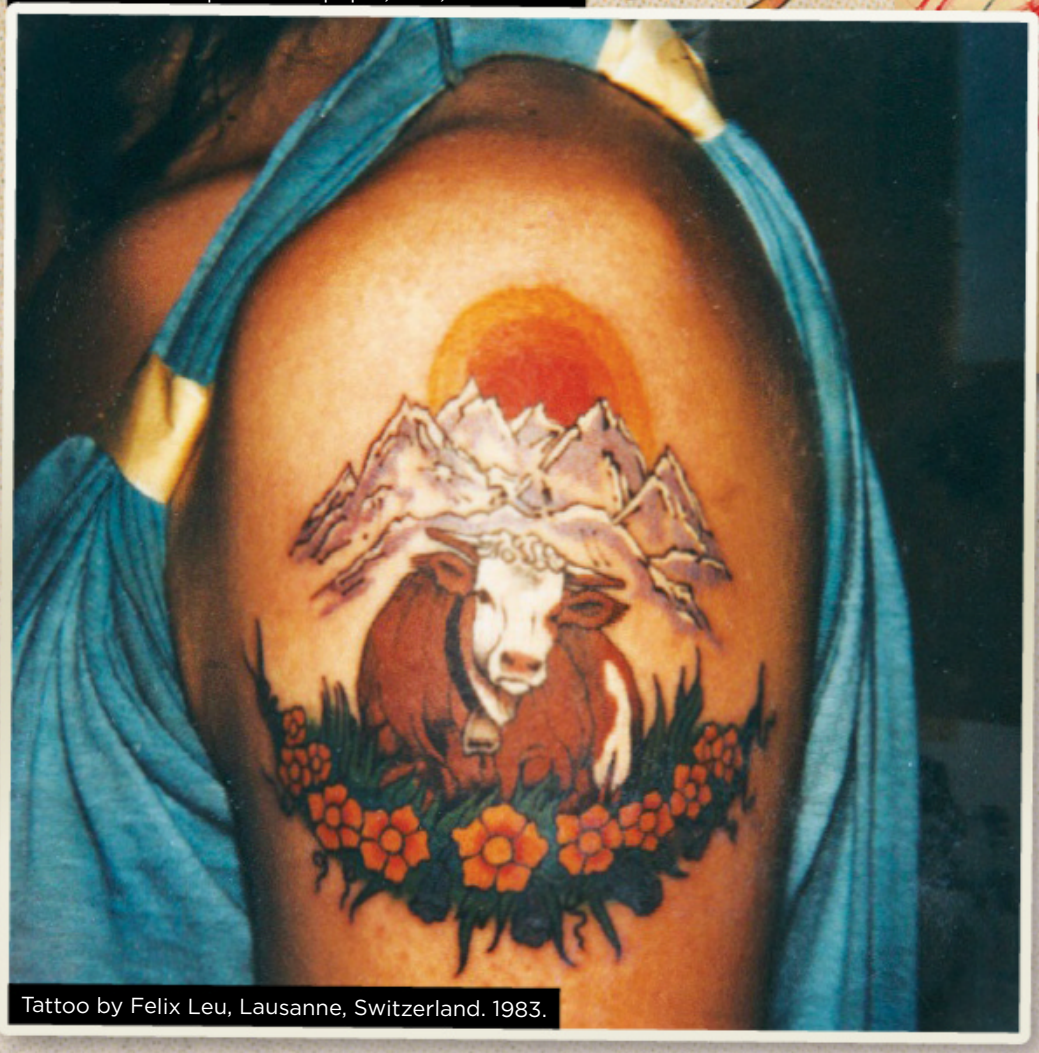
I was invited by an ex-boyfriend to the Jewish Museum for the opening of an exhibition of two sculptors: Tinguely and Nicolas Schöffer. It was a big gala where everyone was very well dressed, there were art collectors, champagne,



Felix Leu with the Bedford van travelling to Yugoslavia in 1978. photo credit Robbie Jack.



Dragon and Opium Pipe: original flash by Felix Leu, ink and coloured pencils on paper, Goa, India. 1979.



Tattoo by Felix Leu, Lausanne, Switzerland. 1983.

etc. I walked around, heading to the buffet and as I entered the room I saw this tall, skinny guy, dressed in a dark red velvet jacket, with a white t-shirt, black skinny jeans and motorcycle boots, he had longish hair... He looked like an artist. We both looked at each other and it was like a flash. I thought *"Oh, he looks interesting..."*

A little bit later I was sitting on a bench with my ex-boyfriend and we were having an argument. Soon he got up and left, leaving me crying. Behind the bench there was a pillar and suddenly Felix appeared from behind it, smiling, and asked me: *"Can I buy you a drink?"* That's how we met. We went around the museum, he told me he was assisting his step-father, Tinguely, for the exhibition and asked me if I wanted to see upstairs, where it was closed to the public. I said ok and we went up. It was all dark and there were just a few things displayed. He tried to kiss me! I said: *"Hey! We just met!"* (laughs). But we really liked each other and we managed to meet again the next day. From then on we were pretty much together all the time. I knew within a few days that this was the most interesting person I'd ever met and I wanted to be with him. A few months later he said that he was going to Morocco and asked me if I wanted to come. I said yes. That's how our story started.

As you said earlier you had a whole life before tattooing. What happened during those 13 years?

We tried many different things. Survival was not always easy. When we lived in cities, we lived in squats. In London, where my mother was, we stayed with her a few times. Felix would go to art schools at night to use the facilities, because they were also open to non-students. He already knew how to do silkscreens and printed about 50 copies of a folio of mandala designs he had drawn. Then I would go to small alternative book-shops and try to sell these. Felix learned how to make jewellery too. Me, I didn't have a work permit because I was there as a tourist, so I did some modelling in an art school where they would pay in cash. I worked also for some people who had gambling tables in Soho and other parts of London. They hired young women like me to run these games; we just had to set up the cards and take the money. It was clubs with people dancing and drinking. I never had any trouble, but that was a very good job, very well paid! And for some of these years we lived in the countryside in Formentera and Ibiza, where life was cheap at the time.

Was it Felix intention to be an artist?

He didn't like the art world. He had experienced it with his mother and Tinguely. He didn't want to be part of it, to deal with galleries or art dealers. He was an artist, 100%, but he didn't believe in compromise, in being nice to somebody he didn't like, just in the hope that they would buy his art. It was hypocrisy. That's what he liked about tattooing so much: it was direct. There was nobody in the middle, just you and the client. A clean transaction. And you could do it anywhere.



Letter from Felix Leu to Robbie Jack: Pens and gouache on brown Kraft paper, 29 x 21cm approx 1978.



Devil Ram's Head with Girls: Original flash by Felix Leu, pen and coloured pencil on tracing paper, Lausanne, Switzerland 1982.

Then, Felix is asked by your mother, who had a boutique in London, to drive her in his van to the Kosovo province of Yugoslavia where she wanted to buy hand embroideries and Kilim carpets. And there, Felix had this revelation about tattooing. How did you look at tattooing at the time?

It was not part of my consciousness, I had never met anybody who was tattooed. The same was true for Felix. The only tattoos we had noticed were the ones we saw in photographs of tribal people in the National Geographic Magazine. We always thought they were beautiful, but we knew nothing about Western tattooing.

It needed a lot of perspicacity for someone who hadn't any relationship to tattooing to understand that here was an opportunity.

Felix understood immediately. If in this little village where they stopped, these young men came to him waving money saying, "Tattoo, tattoo, tattoo" simply by looking at the images that his co-driver, our friend Robbie, had on his arms—a geisha done in Scotland, and a Scottish piper done in Hong-Kong, it would happen everywhere. He was smart. He picked up immediately that it was a good one. And the fact that he was already an artist, and so was I, gave us an advantage. Then Felix started to actually look at tattoos on the arms of truck drivers on their way back to England, when they stopped for gas and to drink a coffee. It was all old style traditional designs. He thought, *"I can do that. I can do even better artistically. I just have to learn how to do it technically"*.



Loretta Leu © Pascal Bagot

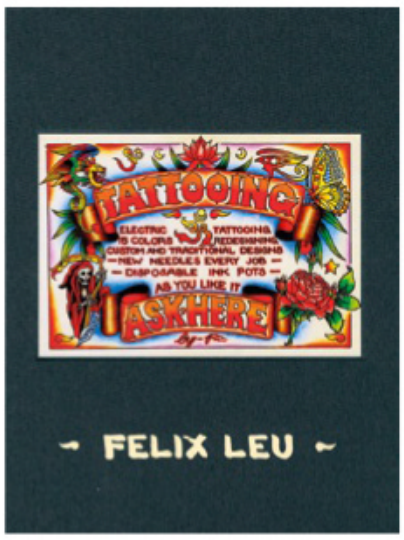
What was your reaction when he came back and told you that your future was going to be in tattooing?

I don't remember, but during our whole life together I had faith in him. I was glad he was figuring it out because I was busy taking care of the kids. He was always the one finding solutions to our problems. *"Let's do this next, let's go there"*. "Ok", I'd say. That's just what was happening next. I don't remember ever having any doubts. ▣

Part two of this interview with Loretta will appear in the next issue of Skin Deep.

Felix Leu: ***Tattooing Ask Here***

192 Pages
Linen cover/Hardback limited edition to 1000 copies
ISBN: 978-0-9551109-8-6
£130
Published by: Seedpress
seedpress.ie
269 colour illustrations,
189 b/w illustrations,
101 colour photographs,
19 b/w photographs





The Leu Family's Family Iron studio, 2003

Tattooing Ask Here is a real milestone of a book but more than that, it acts as a stake in the ground from a time we're perhaps in danger of losing forever. The time when you actually had to get out into the world on a grand scale in order to make your mark on history.

There was never anybody quite like Felix Leu and it's very likely there never will be again but if you ever needed a role model for doing whatever you wanted and doing whatever it took to get by, Felix is as good as it gets and right here, between these covers, is more than adequate proof of a life well lived.

What makes this book fascinating is, seeing page after page of output, how much pop culture and location shapes what he was working with and how that changed through the years as he progressed and yet somehow, taken out of time and context, it still has a life all of its own, but maybe that was his great gift to the world anyway—mirroring life back at you through his own eyes.

He also had one of the clearest visions of what tattooing should be, what it meant to people and if I may quote directly, the following says everything you ever needed to know about the art:

"If you've absolutely convinced yourself that you cannot go on living without this tattoo, no matter what the consequences, then it's time to—do nothing... sit back and wait for a few months.


Tattoo by Felix Leu circa 1982

If you still want this tattoo on you with the same fervour that you felt when the idea came to you in the first place, then, and only then, are you ready for your first tattoo."

There's some real gold in here too, not least the collection of over forty design ideas for the tattoo that finally found a life on the head of Paul Booth. I'd never seen all of them in one place before.

This is an exceptional book in every way it ever needed to be and I tip my hat to Loretta for taking such time and care putting it together... and also for giving up her time to speak about it in the preceding interview.

Beautiful. ▣


www.facebook.com/oldlondonroadtattoos
www.oldlondonroad.co.uk
Tel: 02085494705
Old London Road
Tattoos
37 OLD LONDON ROAD
KINGSTON KT2 6QA


PERFECT CHOKER FOR CHRISTMAS
THIS STUNNING STATEMENT DRUZY CABOCHON AND BLUE SWAROVSKI CRYSTALS LACE CHOKER, WHICH MADE THE PERFECT FINISHING TOUCHES TO YOUR CHRISTMAS OUTFIT.
£25.00 + DELIVERY
facebook
ALTERNATIVEFINCH
WWW.ETSY.COM/UK/LISTING/734185551/DRUZY-CHOKER?REF=SHOP_HOME_FEAT_4


CUSTOM SHOW • LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND MORE...
TATTOO & CUSTOM SHOW
INK & IRON
2020
SUNDAY 5TH APRIL
PRE-SALE TICKETS: £15 / £20 ON THE DOOR
THE NEW BINGLEY HALL 1 HOCKLEY CIRCUS, BIRMINGHAM B18 5PP
WWW.INKANDIRON.CO.UK | INFO@INKANDIRON.CO.UK

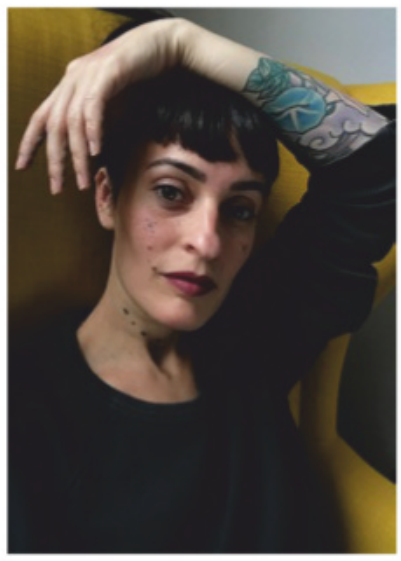

H3AL
TATTOO AFTERCARE
Revitalize - The new Austrailian tattoo care that is creating hype in the industry!
Revitalize H3AL tattoo aftercare was released in October 2018 and is creating extreme interest in its field. Developed and tested by a team who had issues with the generic aftercare they had been advised previously. After 24 months of testing and trialing, the team developed H3AL, which is suitable for a variety of skin types.
H3AL has been trialed, tested and verified by numerous Tattoo Artists all over the World, the outcome of this meant that the thousands of H3AL products stocked were completely sold out in the first eight months of being on sale!
It has now been restocked and the Aussie team are showing no signs of slowing down. A complete kit is on its way, with wholesale opportunities and sponsorships for Artists.
"I absolutely love this product, it's so soothing on my new ink!"
instagram.com/xocloe
www.r3vitalize.com
Australian made and owned. Certified Organic, Vegan and Cruelty free.


Physical GRAFFITI
124 CITY ROAD CARDIFF
ARTIST WANTED
LOOKING FOR AN ARTIST TO JOIN THE TEAM HERE AT PHYSICAL GRAFFITI IN CARDIFF PREFERABLY SOMEONE WHO ENJOYS DOING BLACK AND GREY REALISM BUT ALSO OPEN TO A GOOD ALL ROUND ARTIST OR SOMEONE FAIRLY NEW TO TATTOOING.
EMAIL YOUR PORTFOLIO TO
PGCT@HOTMAIL.CO.UK
LINK US TO YOUR INSTAGRAM PAGE OR POP IN FOR A CHAT

RULE BREAKER

Words: Barbara Pavone

Esther Garcia plays by her own rules — she always has and always will. Even with two decades of experience, the Chicago-based artist still finds ways to push herself and innovate. Whether it's juxtaposing two unexpected styles (she fuses blackout work with botanical imagery inspired by Dutch Masters beautifully) or offering a unique tattoo curation service in which she doesn't actually tattoo, Garcia isn't afraid to take risks. What else is up her sleeve? We tracked her down to find out.





butterstinker • butterfatstudios.com

"In an effort to keep a good life balance, and preserve my health and sanity, I've made a lot of decisions that aren't typical for the tattoo world," admits Esther Garcia.

Decisions like the one to stop accepting client requests. "I exclusively offer my own projects for people to choose from," she says, explaining, "The primary benefit is that I get to work with clients who are very comfortable with my process. Even if they are not experienced tattoo collectors, they have done their research and are happy to put themselves in my hands."

It may be an unconventional approach, but it has certainly been a fulfilling one. "It's an honour and a joy to work like this and it's great to show up for work and know we're both so excited to be there," she continues. "I used to feel so much pressure to 'mind-read' to some degree, to please the client — this method seems to sidestep that entirely, so I can rest easier and do my work in a more relaxed frame of mind."

What's more, "it allows me to guide the content of my portfolio and be very specific about the techniques and skills I am working on. When I want to add a new technique to my toolbox, I can offer projects that allow me to carefully experiment until I have mastered the technique, then I can highlight it in my next offerings."

So, about twice a year, Garcia posts designs to her website for fans to snap up

Esther Garcia On... Tattoo Realities
"I think that one of the most telling things about being a tattooer is defined in the earliest days: The nature of this beast is that our successes and failures are permanent, so in order to be able to sleep at night, we have to quickly develop a way to compartmentalise our mistakes. But if you do it too well, you run the risk of cutting yourself off from the learning process."

and "when the resulting tattoos and their spin-offs aren't keeping me busy enough, I'll offer more. I feel more lively and creative when I work this way and it shows in my tattoos," she notes, revealing, "I don't think I'll go back to generally opening my books for client submissions again — I'm enjoying myself way too much this way!"

From Self-Doubt to Self-Love

"Other than a couple of hand-pokes when I was in high school, I don't really remember seeing or being around tattoos when I was younger," recalls Garcia. "I got a glimpse of their power when I was in art school, when I did a faux photo documentary project about tattoos. I just Sharpied them on my subjects, but I was so intrigued by what happened to a simple design when I got the placement right. Suddenly, an image that had been flat in every sense of the word became dimensional in ways I couldn't then describe. Ways that I still struggle to explain," she admits. "Everything about the process spoke to me, resonated with my quiet urges to tinker; to alter myself; to make meticulous drawings; to find meaningful ways to connect to another person."

Faced with the challenge of learning to tattoo, there was never any doubt in Garcia's mind how she'd do just that. "I was self-taught since I dropped out of kindergarten, so that skill was ingrained in me early and deeply," she starts. "I am curious by nature and will always be a learner. My tattoo apprenticeship seemed to only raise more questions and outline my artistic deficiencies, so once I was able to get a rough handle on the basics, I was off to my normal tricks and experimentation."

Despite her affinity for the craft, however, her confidence was certainly tested along the way. "Tattooing is so difficult, and the learning curve can be so painful for your ego, that your survival strategy can end up being too effective and you just put things away without giving yourself the opportunity to understand your own process and use your errors for future benefit," she points out. "It is rare to have an environment where you can feel safe critiquing your work with other artists, so you have to be brave enough to enter into that alone and trust you don't spiral into a bad place if you have to confront some serious failure in your work."

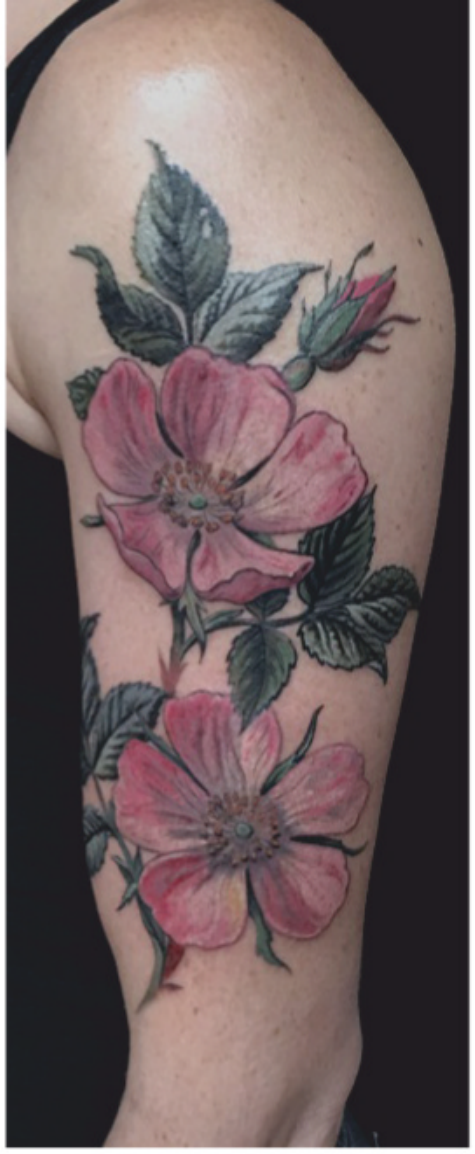
Esther Garcia On...
Peer Feedback
"I do have a couple of friends now who I can workshop a design with in advance, but no one I have yet to get a real critique from on a completed work. It's a scary thing to open yourself to a discussion of the ways you could have done a tattoo better. It's vital, though, and the only reason my work has made major jumps across my career."

"Tattooers are known for a certain amount of swagger and confidence and, to some degree, our work depends on projecting that because a client won't commit to an appointment with an artist who doesn't seem confident in what they can produce," she elaborates. "I really believe a lot of us suffer in silence for at least some of our careers. Young tattooers are allowed to think that they are the only ones who live like this and are not given the tools or community support to manage

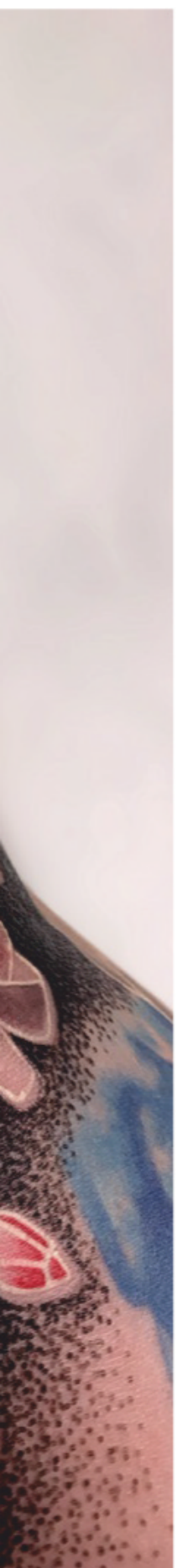


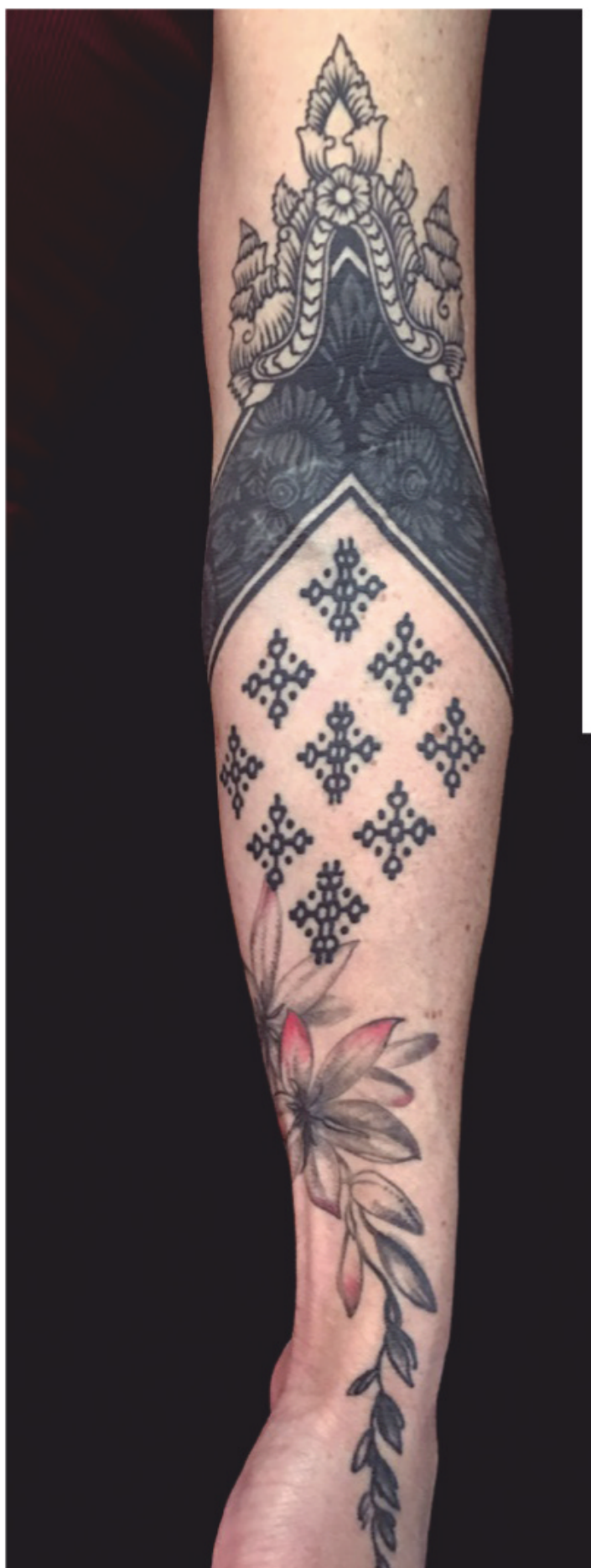














their own psychology and yet, no one has ever innovated or made dramatic growth until they felt ownership."

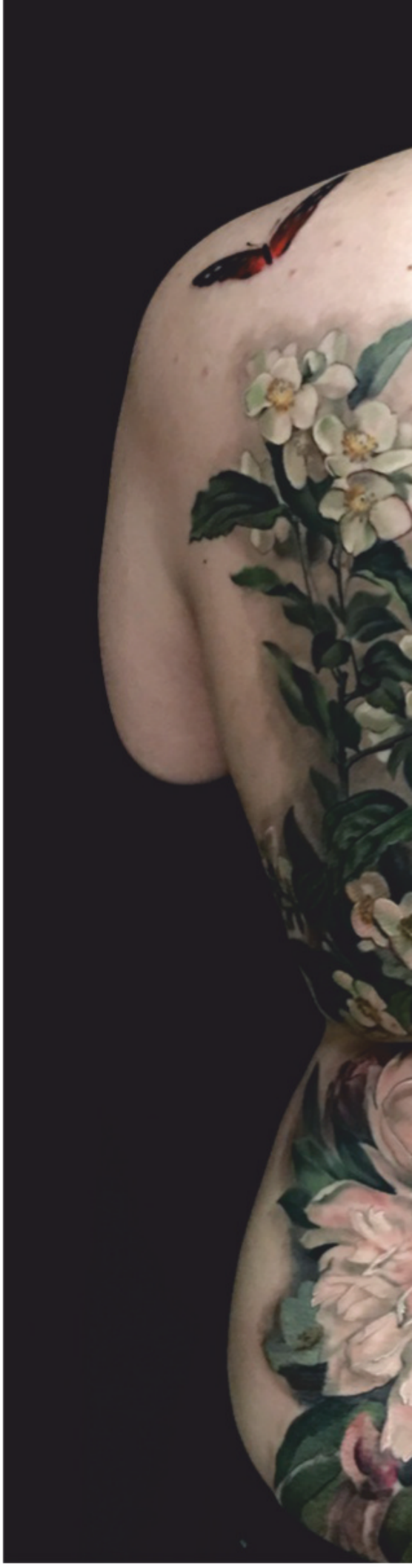
In short: "You have to believe you have a right to a place in the business before you can bring to it the full force of your personality and attention."

A Fusion of Two Worlds

These days, Garcia is exploring one particular tattoo style — or, rather, two styles fused into one — that's garnering her loads of attention and praise. "I hadn't yet combined the two styles I generally worked in: colour floral and blackwork," she starts, sharing her inspiration. "I seemed to have two different pools of clients and wasn't sure if I could merge them, or if people would want tattoos like that," but she gave it a go anyways.

"I tiptoed towards it for a few years, as my clients weren't entirely sure about the heaviness of all the black,"





she reveals. “I did a few smaller pieces, usually just two or three sessions each, of black diamonds with bright florals falling out of the frame. This was in 2015, so you can see how it takes me a few years to develop an idea!”

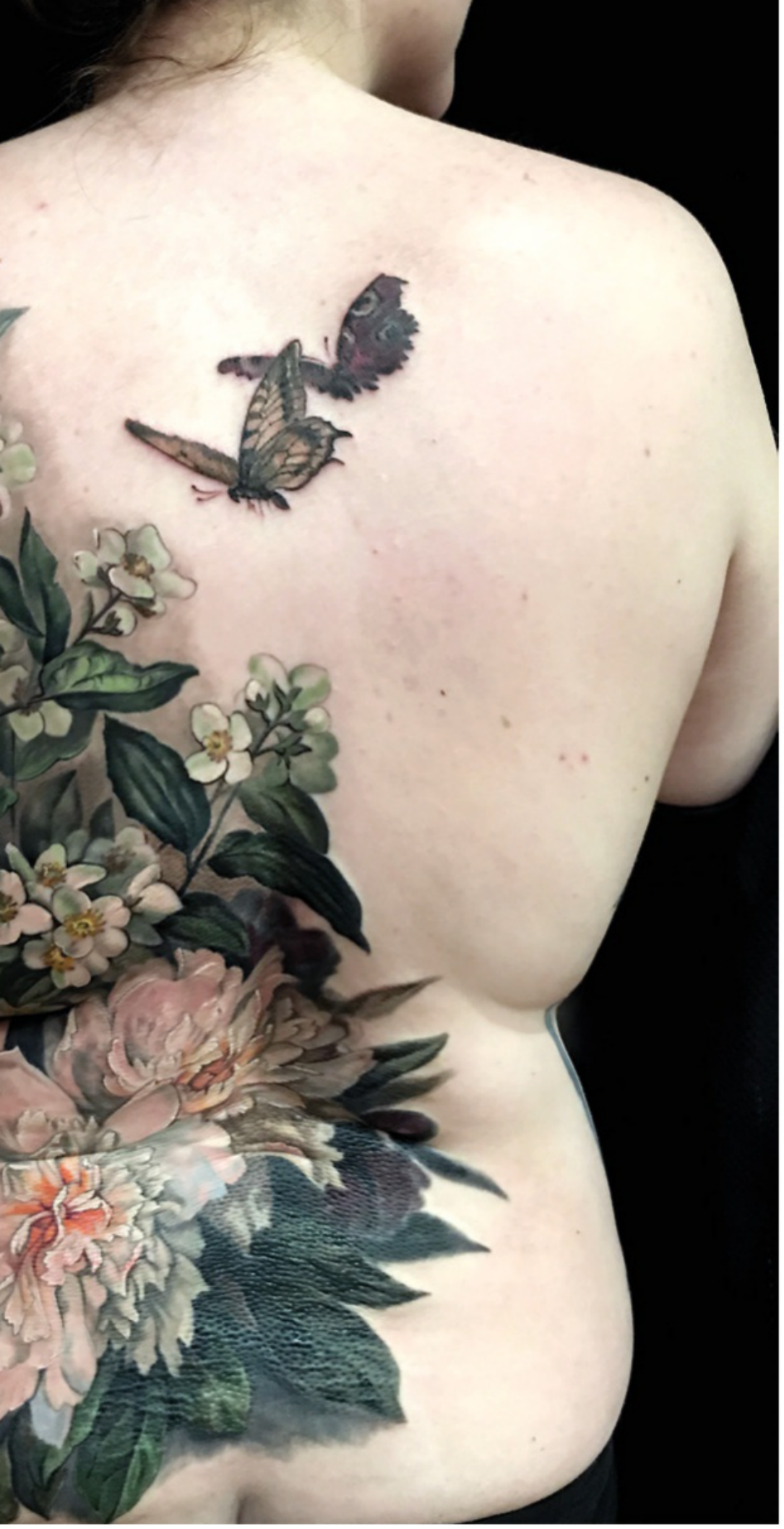
“First, it was just a diamond shape with a tiny shadow part, then it was a black diamond,” she says, walking through the creative process. “My clients seemed to like them and they provided a richness to the delicacy of the flowers that I really loved, so I tried them as half-sleeves, then eventually as full sleeves, which made such a huge difference in the visual impact. I love doing these and can imagine spending at least a few years working out the subtleties of focus and shadow in this technique.”

Esther Garcia On... Major Influences
“I’ve long been influenced by the dark drama of the Dutch Masters’ floral paintings. Jan Davidsz. de Heem, Abraham Mignon and Willem van Aelst are particular influences for me. Their leaves... the bug nibbles... oh my god, they kill me! They’re so good!”

The Birth of a Mentor

In addition to tattooing, Garcia has several non-ink projects in the works, including Flower Thieves, a collaboration with graphic designer Kyle Letendre, which has borne “a fabric pattern for Deco-inspired lingerie, plus a couple of can designs for a local brewery. It’s so exciting to see my drawings flow on moving fabric or wrap on non-human forms,” she gushes, noting, “It’s a challenge to design for something non-human at this point, as I’m always looking for bone structure!”

She’s also spent the past couple of years teaching tattooers about art techniques and business practices. “Each



of these classes touches on personal psychology as well, and some also touch on client psychology," she shares. "The other thing I've been doing lately is offering consults for clients in need of cover-ups or collection advice. I was getting a lot of emails from people who seemed to need a service that wasn't available. These consults are advice-only, not resulting in tattooing from me," she explains.

"It's a great opportunity to share the expertise of more than 20 years and the conversations that arise from an impartial setting are really striking. As well as giving direction about balancing colours/styles/textures in their collection, I can advise collectors about how best to approach the artists they admire and also what not to do. I can speak plainly about subjects that would be tricky if they were my own client, like etiquette, tipping, micro-



managing, etc."

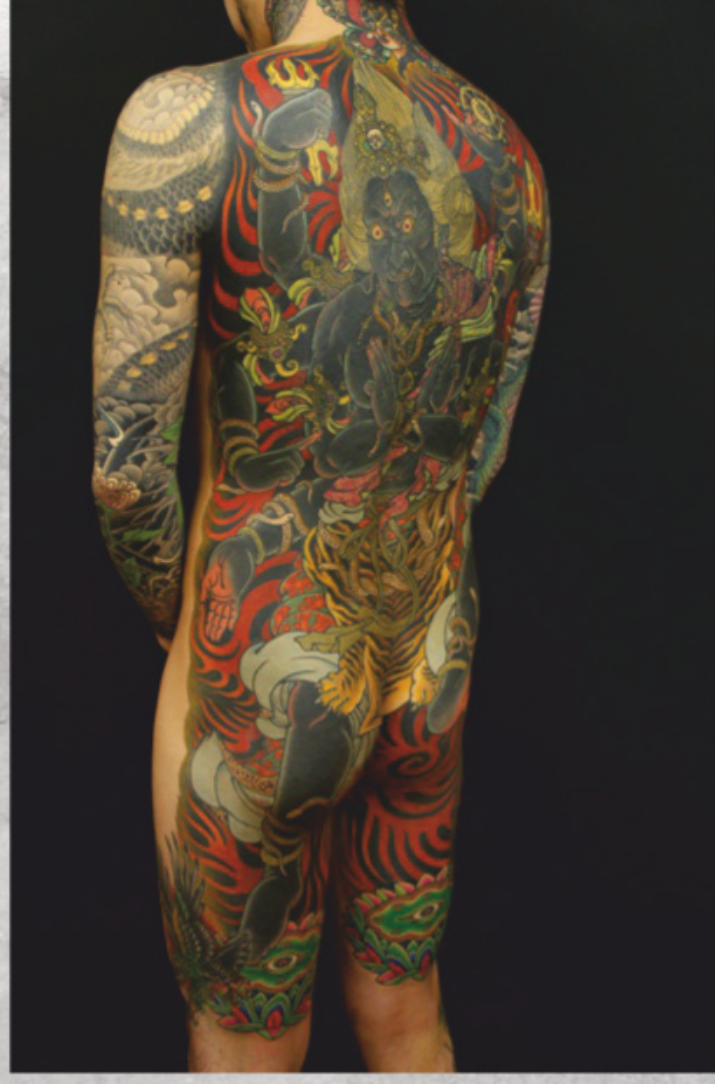
"If they are looking for cover-up advice, I can share my own experience as an artist working with difficult cover-ups and advise about realistic expectations, with or without lasering," she adds. "I've noticed that clients listen better to the facts I'm sharing if they don't think they can convince me to take the project. My impartiality makes me a better guide."

But that's not all: "There's another level to this service that's a form of curation. Essentially, I am contracted as an exterior designer. I tell my clients what tattoo to get and who to get it by, while considering their personal aesthetics and coverage preferences. I collect necessary photos, measurements and information, then propose the project to the artist we've chosen. Hopefully, they agree to work with us. In some cases, I suggest a collaboration between two artists I admire and do my best to work as the moderator. It can be challenging to manage tattooers and not cramp anyone's style, but the possible results are too great to not attempt!"

Looking ahead, Garcia will be opening Butterfat Studios in Chicago, a reincarnation of her former all-female studio (that was in the same spot), except this time, "it's just me in an airy, sun-drenched space full of plants. I work well alone in a space I've organised myself, full of systems I've invented and implemented," she confesses. "I'm looking forward to settling in here for a few years and slowing down on my travel schedule. It should be interesting to see what comes of it and my renewed attention to tattooing." ▣







JAPANESE WHISPERS

He is one of the most gifted Japanese tattooers of his generation. From the region of Niigata in the North-East of Japan, he's spreading the beauty of Japanese tattoo culture. All tattoo lovers praise his complex and very detailed compositions which adorn the bodies of some very lucky collectors, but after 20 years, Tomo is ready to move on...

silkneedletattoo.com • @tomo_silkneedletattoo • silkneedletattoo

Silkneedle is the name of your studio, where does it comes from?

In the past, we used silk needles for making a tattoo with the tebori technique. Once used, they were sharpened again and reused. Somehow, it is a way for me to get back to the source, where it started. I want to keep the motivation that comes from that period.

Can we go back to your journey?

After high-school, I went to the design school in Niigata. I wanted to be a drawer, a *mangaka* (manga drawer) or an illustrator. After I finished my studies, I had a tough time to find a job. But, I was 20 years old at the time, I had the opportunity for the first to see a tattoo that had been done on a friend of mine. It was a Japanese style tattoo. I was so impressed, that was a real cultural shock. As my friends knew I was a good drawer, they told me I should try.

What happened?

I looked out for the material, but I couldn't find anything

Words: Pascal Bagot • @pascalbagot







FOR A TATTOOER IT IS IMPORTANT, NOT ONLY TO HAVE TECHNIQUE, BUT ALSO TO KNOW THE *UKIYO-E* CULTURE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

in any shop. At the time there was this Japanese magazine, a very underground publication called Burst. Inside, there were some pages dedicated to tattooing and I started to think about it even more seriously. In one of them, there was an article about tattoo machines done in jail by prisoners. I understood I could build one myself. I was 21.

Tattoo was still taboo. How did you approach this?

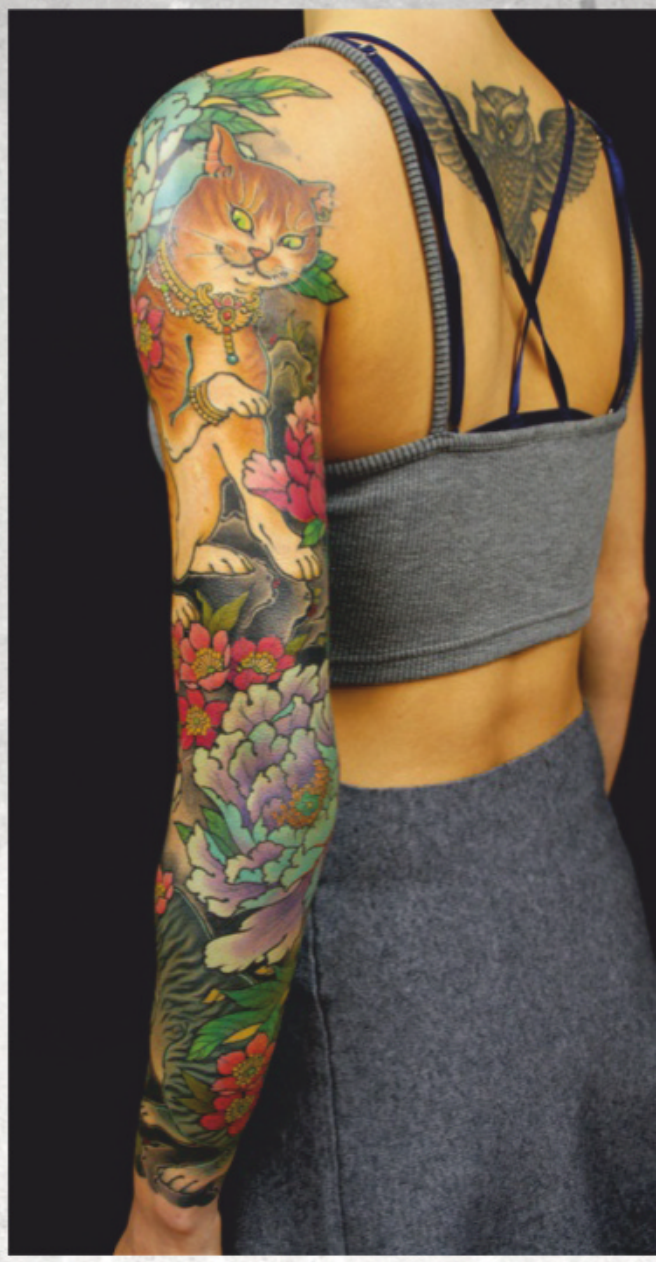
I didn't have any hesitation, even though it was VERY MUCH taboo. I talked about it with my parents. They tried to reason with me and told me it was not something that was possible. Moreover, tattooing was for yakuza. But, I was so impressed by the tattoo seen on my friend's body, that I had some sort of revelation. It was like opening my eyes.

Did you grow up in an art environment?

My father was a craftsman, he was a metal worker. I also did a little bit with him. So, after my studies finished, as it was difficult for me to find a job, I worked with my father.





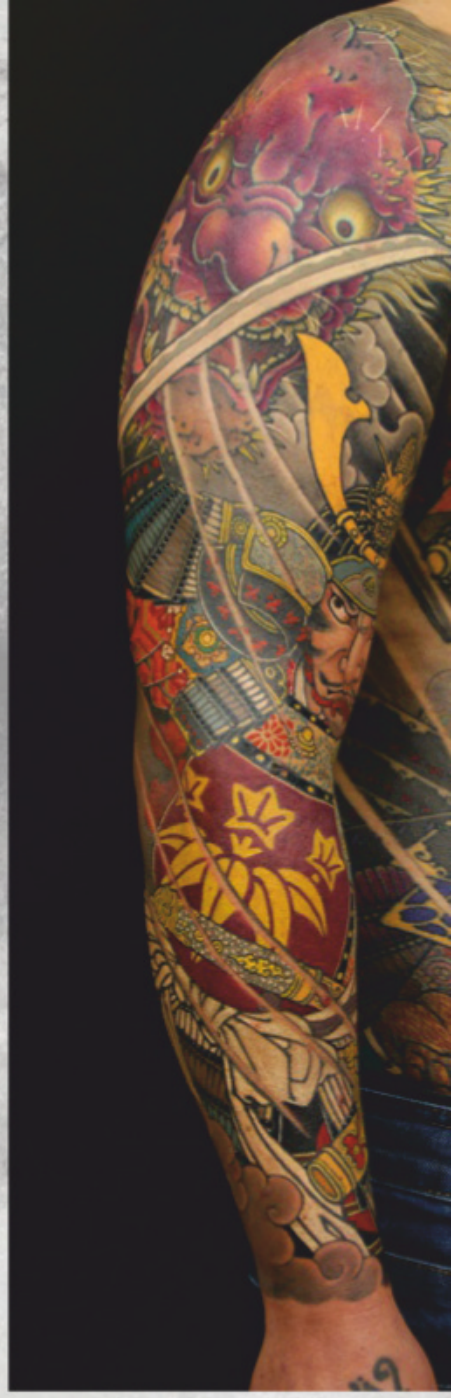
Where does your taste for drawing comes from?
It is something that I do naturally since I was a kid. In my life, I think that I spent more time drawing than anything else. I wanted to draw posters, advertisings... I had a lot of interest in many different things. I used to do oil painting too, I learnt the technique before going to school and it's something I'm still doing today.

You started tattooing yourself?
Yes. My mother was crying so much, she was so sad I had left the 'normal' way. I felt a little bit sorry for her, but that was my thing. Little by little, I kept tattooing myself and progressively she gave up telling me anything. Today, it's been 20 years I've been doing this profession and my mother, finally, considers it to be something normal.

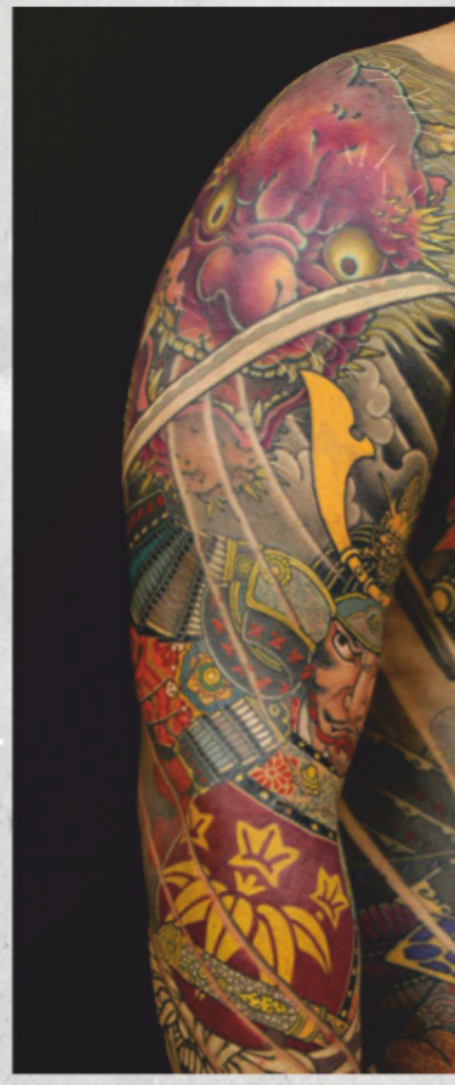
In which way has the perception of the work has changed over this time period?
There is a lot of information available online and a lot of tattooers have a very good technique (for realism, por-











traits, etc.). Even after only two to three years, they can do something that needs skills. But in a way, it is some sort of copy/paste work, a technique which doesn't have that much depth. For a tattooer it is important, not only to have technique, but also to know the *ukiyo-e* (Japanese print) culture and its significance, the history. People who can draw don't know the movements of the muscles and the articulations. But real tattooers have to take those kind of parameters into consideration.

Do you have young tattooers coming to you for an apprenticeship?

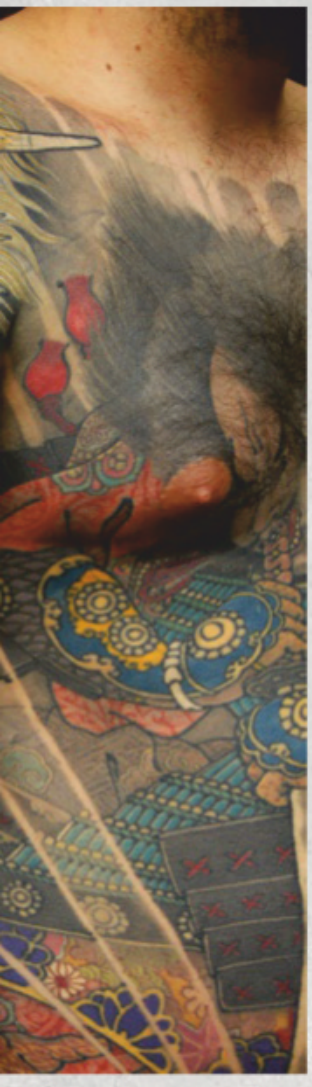
No, there aren't. Anyway, I'm in the countryside. Foreigners send emails sometimes.

Do you work in a private apartment?













PEOPLE WHO CAN DRAW DON'T KNOW THE MOVEMENTS OF THE MUSCLES AND THE ARTICULATIONS - REAL TATTOOERS HAVE TO TAKE THOSE KIND OF PARAMETERS INTO CONSIDERATION

Yes, at the 4th floor. No advertising, it's private and quite small.

What were your sources of inspiration when you started?

I like the books about painting. I read a lot of artbooks, about Japanese tattooing, but I love Alfons Mucha too! His drawing line is very sophisticated. I find inspiration for waves in the organic movements of the hair of the maid he draws. I find inspiration in the Japanese but also in foreign art culture. The scope of my curiosity is very wide, I don't limit myself.

Does that mean you'd be open to do styles other than Japanese tattooing?

Absolutely, but I don't have any demand for that. My customers know my style, very detailed, and they mainly








TO DO A BACKPIECE, I NEED MUCH MORE TIME TO LEARN AND STUDY THAN TO DO THE BACKPIECE ITSELF

come for that kind of work. To be honest, I'd like to change it and make something simpler. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (famous *ukiyo-e* artist) taught us that a good tattoo is something that should be very readable at a distance. By concentrating on that, I would like to make the people feel some kind of power in my drawing. It is a little bit of a comeback to the *wabori* spirit that I would like to do.

Japanese tattooing represents the Japanese culture, how much of your time do you spend learning it?

A lot. Researching is what takes most of my time. To do a backpiece, I need much more time to learn and study than to do the backpiece itself. The knowledge is not officially necessary but obviously, if you're interested in any drawing, you should know the story behind.

Do you feel more like a craftsman or an artist?

Craftsman, we say *shokunin* (high-skilled craftsman) in Japan. An artist expresses something that comes from him. But the craftsman answers to the demand of a customer.

What proportion do you have between your Japanese and foreign customers?

70% are from a foreign country who come to Japan. Half of them are Asians, the other half is Western. ▣

BACKPIECES, SLEEVES & AND OTHER LARGE-SCALE TATTOOS

DISCOVERED AT SZCZECIN TATTOO CONVENTION
5–6 OCTOBER 2019

PHOTO CREDIT: KAMILA BURZYMOWSKA

SUBSCRIBE

SAVE OVER 15%

FROM £9.99



IT'S EASY TO SUBSCRIBE!

CALL: **01244 881888**

OR VISIT: **WWW.SKINDEEP.CO.UK**

See website for terms and conditions.



PORTFOLIOS

BEN OSROWITZ • CRAIG STARTIN
DANIELLE DALTON • DEK KENT • KIRSTY
BEX HOWE • CALLUM GLOVER
SARAH YOUNG









BEN OSROWITZ

INSTAGRAM.COM/BENOZTATTOOS
BENOZTATTOOS@GMAIL.COM

CRAIG STARTIN

INSTAGRAM.COM/CRAIGSTARTINTATTOOART
CRAIG-STAR@HOTMAIL.CO.UK

















DANIELLE DALTON

INSTAGRAM.COM/DANIDALTONTATTOO
DANIDALTONTATTOO@GMAIL.COM

DEK KENT

INSTAGRAM.COM/DEKKENT
ELECTRIC.KICKS@HOTMAIL.COM

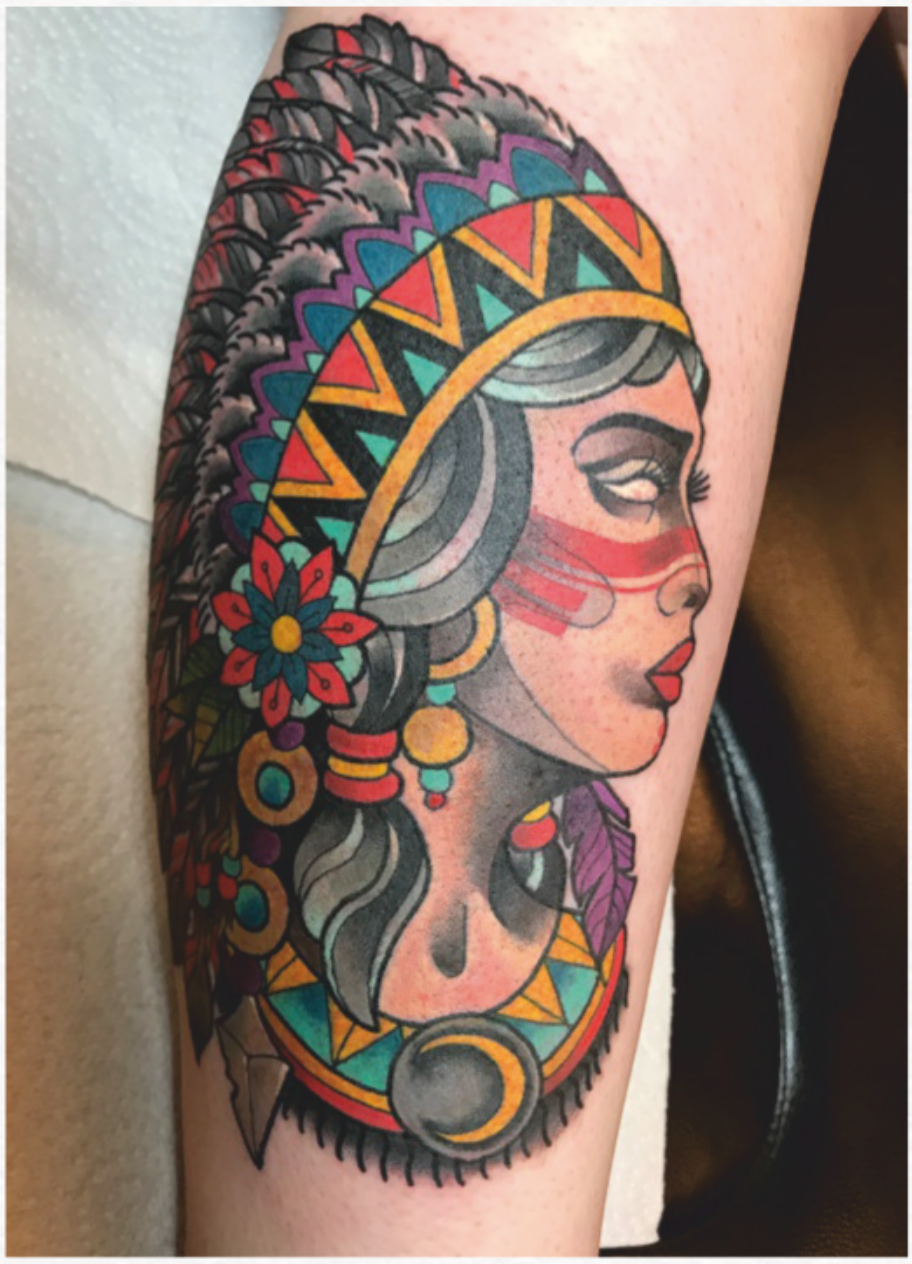












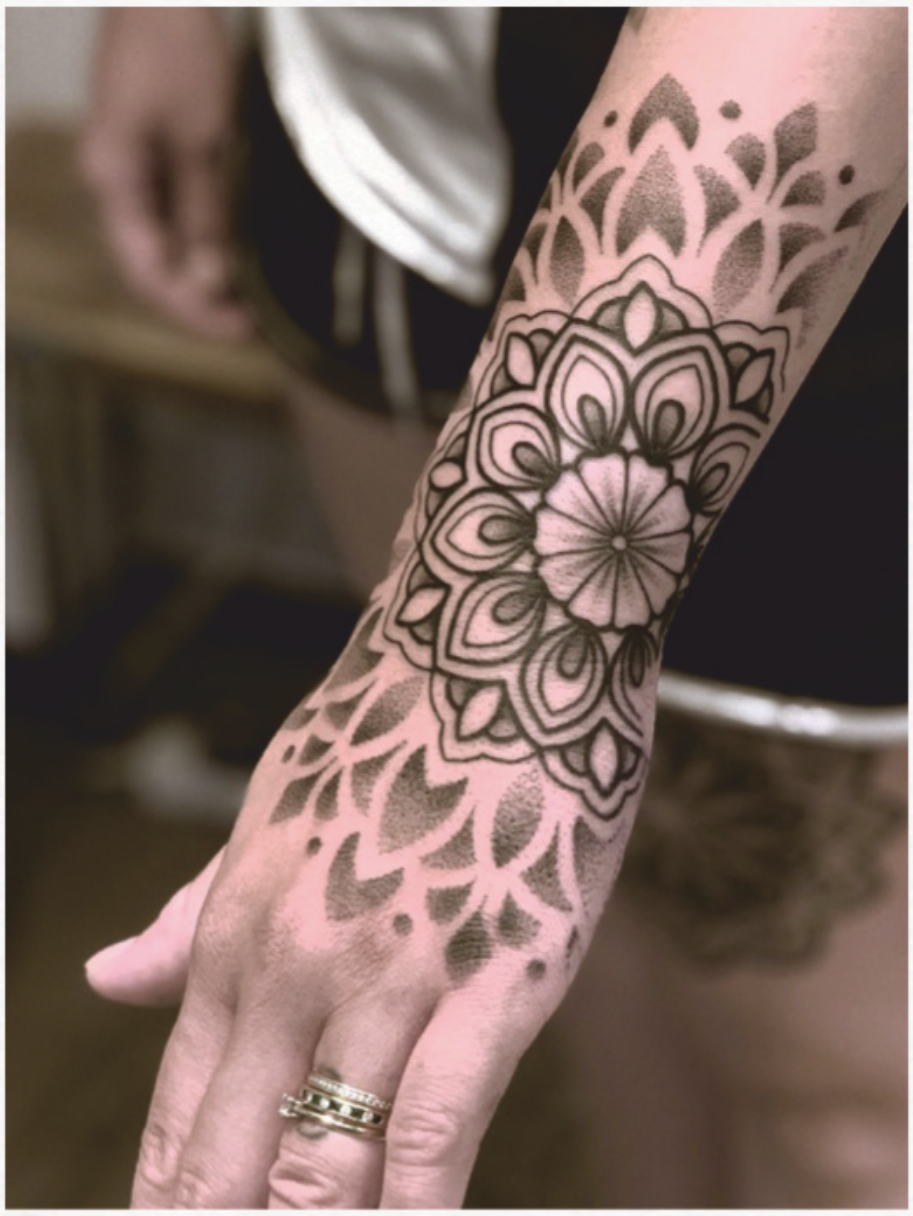


KIRSTY

FACEBOOK.COM/TRIBALIMAGESTATTOOS
TRIBALIMAGES@LIVE.CO.UK

BEX HOWE

INSTAGRAM.COM/BEXHUHTATTOO
BEXH94@GOOGLEMAIL.COM

















CALLUM GLOVER

INSTAGRAM.COM/TATTOOSBYCALLUM
TATTOOSBYCALLUM@HOTMAIL.COM

SARAH YOUNG

HANDOFMYSTERIES.CO.UK
INFO@HANDOFMYSTERIES.CO.UK











Palm Reader



For centuries we have looked to our palms as a valuable source of information, a complex blueprint of one's identity, both physical and spiritual. The latter has seen the palm as a bodily map for instigating premonitions, with its many criss-crossing lines foretelling either a joyful life or a foredooming resolution

@lukeaashley

To tell ones future is debatable but to scan a fingerprint leaves no room for question, it being an accurate physical code of personal recognition, utilised for forensic and medical examination. The tattooist Luke Ashley looks to the palm as a compelling location for tattooing, with his work drawing new unique stories for its bearer to carry. His perfect linework at a location known for its difficult and tough terrain is testament to Luke's ability, with resultant work being incredibly clean and crisp. Luke's tattoos set a high marker for what can be achieved on the palm, with the tattooist drawing his own future one bold line at a time.

Your palm work is incredible, what drew you to working at this bodily location?

It never really crossed my mind to do palm tattoos before a friend asked for one. I hadn't really seen too many and didn't know anything about them apart from that they were super painful and hard to get to heal in this placement. So I tried it on my friend, straight off I knew I wasn't going deep enough even whilst doing the tattoo because I didn't want to hurt them. And yeah it didn't heal great. So next week we did the other hand and I think I tattooed it into his soul! I didn't hold back at all and just tried my hardest to get it in there and to this day that palm tattoo is still super solid. Once I had done one I really enjoyed the challenge of getting them to heal how I wanted them to, so I tried to tattoo as many peoples' palms as I could. I really enjoy the placement of palms and making designs take up the entire space including fingers and thumbs.



How does palm work challenge you and your abilities?

The palm of the hand is a pretty challenging place to tattoo because the skin is a lot tougher than other areas and each part of the palm is different. The side of the hand is really thick skinned, fingers are spongy and the knuckles are rock hard, so there are lots of things to remember whilst doing each part. I need to get the ink just where it needs to be so it can heal perfect. Another factor is everyone's hands are different, some are small, some are soft,

Words: Steven Guichard-Kenny










I KNOW OF OTHER ARTISTS USING ROTARIES BUT FOR THE WAY I TATTOO I'VE FOUND COILS KEEP THE CONSISTENCY I LIKE

and some are just a giant callus, so I have to be prepared for a range of hands. I get asked a lot if I'm bored of doing palms and touch wood I'm not yet. I really enjoy trying new techniques and the challenges it brings.

Why do clients look to have their palms tattooed?

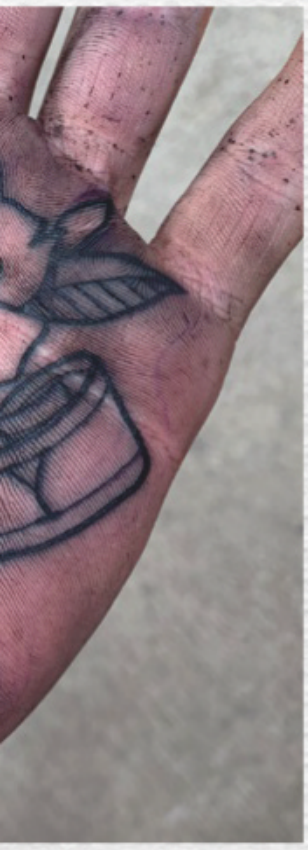
I mean for me personally I got mine done because I just thought it was a cool place to have a tattoo. I don't have the tops of my hands tattooed and the palms were my first sort of 'visible' tattoo. Before then I had no plans to get any visible tattoos but I was tattooing people's palms and didn't have one myself. And the best way to learn is by watching and feeling it for yourself. Now I really love looking down at my palm tattoos, noticing the plain areas of skin at the top, and the great contrast it makes. A lot of my clients who come to get palms are either fully covered or very heavily tattooed. So I think maybe they want their palms done because it's their last spots to get tattooed.

What technical elements go into making your palm work bold and distinctive?

I learnt to tattoo using a coil machine so I use coil machines to do my palm tattoos. I know of other artists using rotaries but for the way I tattoo I've found coils keep the consistency I like. I can also tune each machine so that it hits right for the size needle I'm going to use, which I like because I use a different range of needles for each tattoo. I'm asked a lot what size needles I use and I literally use every needle size available. I'm always trying new needles and different configurations because different needles work better in different skin thicknesses, and after a while you work out what works best for each type. The best advice I can give someone is to just try things out and find what works for you. It's basic advice but it's how I managed to learn what worked best for me.

Is there a longevity to palm tattoos?

Once a palm tattooed is fully healed (after six to eight weeks) what's left will be there forever, much like any other tattoo, once it's in there it's not going anywhere. I have had my palm tattoos for five years now and they look pretty much the same as when they were just healed. I've








seen palm tattoos that are really old and they look super solid even after like twenty years, so they won't be rubbing off once they're there.

What can clients do to ensure your work remains looking fresh for longer?

Before coming and getting palm tattoos I have had a few people who have been moisturising theirs palms leading up to their appointments, and it makes the world of difference. Even with tough callus hands it makes a massive difference to me being able to get the ink where it needs to be. To ensure a palm tattoo will stay fresh forever all you need to do is look after it during the healing process; once it's healed do what you want but during its healing ease up on the weight lifting or any activities where your palms will get sweaty. Sweaty palms can cause infection and drag out the healing process.

For someone that hasn't got their palms tattooed, what's the healing process like?

I think the best thing to do with a fresh palm tattoo is try to do as little with it as possible. This is very difficult when people come and get both at the same time but is still manageable. My advice is to keep it dry, applying cream when it looks like it needs it. The first four days are pretty important as it's the first bit of time for the tattoo to start healing and the less it's agitated during this time the better. If it has too much movement it can cause more scabbing, which can draw ink out of the skin. After two weeks the scabs will appear and start flaking off. After four weeks all the scabs should be gone and a weird thing happens where it can go a little lighter, and then by six weeks it will go back to a darker shade and be settled in. By this time you will be able to see what has stayed and what has dropped out.

Another thing that can happen with palm tattoos during the healing process is a glow around the lines. The first time I saw it I was quite worried that the lines would stay that thick, as the line weight looked nearly double in size, but this can happen with different skin types. It doesn't happen every time but it is still pretty common. It will stay for around six weeks and then by that time it will have completely disappeared.

Is an occasional touch-up a common factor of getting your palms tattooed?

Palms can need touch ups; the majority of palms won't








I'VE SEEN PALM TATTOOS THAT ARE REALLY OLD AND THEY LOOK SUPER SOLID EVEN AFTER LIKE TWENTY YEARS

need touch ups but if they need them I'm more than happy to do them. It's obviously amazing when I get a healed photo and it's just how I wanted it but it's not always the case. Most of the time it will be a few lines here and there that are needed to touch-up, normally the smaller lines. I actually quite like the aesthetic of palm tattoos not being perfect and I like when they look a little bit beaten up! I guess that's not good to admit but I think it gives the tattoo a bit of character.

How do different ink colours effect a palm tattoo?

I recently have done a few palm tattoos in red ink. I've seen them healed and they still look vibrant. They heal in a little bit of a darker and muted tone, but they always look sick. I have also recently done palm work in white ink, which I was quite apprehensive of but I had seen it done and healed so I thought I'd give it a go. In an ideal world I would have done something big and bold but I did a very detailed scientific diagram of a virus. I used a range of needles including a trusty 3rl and it's again settled in really well. I'd be interested in doing some more white ink tattoos but for an overall look I much prefer black ink outlines.

In some of my work I will use grey wash ink, often as highlights, to add depth and detail to pieces. I wasn't sure at first of how they would heal up but they settle in nicely. Sometimes they can require a touch up if they heal a little too light. I also like to use grey wash as sometimes in a design the lines might be too close together for a solid black.

Something I've been requested to do but no one has actually gone through with yet is a full colour palm tattoo, which I'd love to make. It would require a few sessions adding different colours and tones but I think it could be a fun project.

Have you gone completely palm work, or are you still tattooing other areas?

No I still do lots of other placements as well! I really enjoy doing other placements and I love doing a range of styles. I've only recently moved out of a street shop so I was doing








lots of walk-ins and tattooing whatever my clients asked of me. This was really fun to do because people always have the weirdest ideas, which make for the best tattoos. But I'm really enjoying the palms and being able to focus on pushing my style and technique. I've got a few really fun neo traditional pieces on the go that I'm really enjoying, so would love some more tattoos to do in that style.

What tattooists have developed your working methodologies?

I've always looked up to Kieran Williams (@k_ieran) and the way he makes his linework fit the body so nice and symmetrical. I've always been blown away by how clean his work is; I always strive to try and get my work to that standard. Mark Jelliman (@mark_tattooist) has been working with us at *South City Market* (@southcitymarket) recently and I've learnt a lot from watching the way he works. Again, his linework is insanely clean but he's very methodical in his tattooing and I really like that. I like to be organised and have all my designs prepared and be as ready as I can be before actually tattooing, because once I start a palm tattoo I don't want to have to stop for anything; I need to get it done as efficiently and quickly as possible.

I FEEL LIKE THAT IS HOW YOU GET THE BEST OUT OF ANY ARTIST, GO TO THEM WITH A BASIC IDEA AND TELL THEM TO GO WILD

I am a resident artist at *South City Market* and my boss man Ricky (@ricktattoo) is the hardest working man I've ever met in my life. I thought I worked hard and then I met Ricky. He has made the tattoo studio of the future and I couldn't wish for a better work environment. He is always five steps ahead and that is nice to be around because it makes me think what can I do to improve my tattooing and what can I do for the studio.

The subject matter of your work is pretty eclectic, how would you come to define your style?

I don't know if I have a style. I've always struggled with style and always wanted to have a style but it just never came to me. I think from working in street shops my whole life I am able to adapt to the client's specifications













I ACTUALLY QUITE LIKE THE AESTHETIC OF PALM TATTOOS NOT BEING PERFECT AND I LIKE WHEN THEY LOOK A LITTLE BIT BEATEN UP!

and then do my own thing with it. More recently I am being given loads more freedom to go wild with designs and I'm not holding back. I love taking up as much space as I can, using loads of lines and just seeing what happens. I really appreciate the trust people give me to do what I want; I feel like that is how you get the best out of any artist, go to them with a basic idea and tell them to go wild. That's how I got most of my tattoos, some look completely different to what I had in my head but soon as I saw the design I loved it.

I love doing anything in a neo traditional style as I can use heavy and thin line weights next to each other to give a bit of depth to the piece. I think my all time favourite thing to do is heavy geometric palms where there are lots of heavy lines and full coverage.

What subject matter is currently inspiring you?

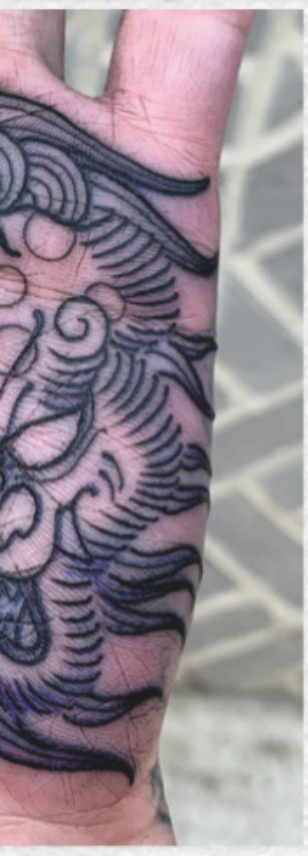
I love anything gnarly and evil that I can add loads of detail too! A lot of my work is custom ideas from my clients so I often find a lot of inspiration after the fact of knowing what I'm going to be tattooing. I'm inspired a lot by my clients' ideas and some of the weird things they request; the weirder the better. I'm really enjoying tattooing medieval weaponry and love the work of Matina Marinou (@sickrosetattoo) who does some gnarly weapons with lots of texture and detail.

My all-time favourite thing to do is big geometric palms, finding inspiration from artists like Kieran Williams (@k_ieran) and Sam Rivers (@samrivers_curiosities). I really enjoy linework tattoos so I am always looking around for patterns. I really enjoy architecture and looking at different building structures, my favourites being old cathedrals and churches. If I ever travel I love to try and visit as many as I can. I fell in love with Barcelona and the buildings there.

I'm mainly inspired by the artists around me. Where I work at *South City Market* we have guests from all over the world, so every day I have the opportunity to meet new artists and see what and how they tattoo. I work alongside Loz (@loz_tattooer) and Loz Thomas (@loz-thomas_tattoo); I love working with them as we all bring











I THINK MY ALL TIME FAVOURITE THING TO DO IS HEAVY GEOMETRIC PALMS WHERE THERE ARE LOTS OF HEAVY LINES AND FULL COVERAGE

different creative aspects and outlooks to the table, they inspire me a lot.

What tattooists should people be looking at right now?

I recently got some black work blastovers from Loz (@loz_tattooer) and they have settled in perfectly. The black is so nice and solid. She's only been tattooing for around a year and is making a big impression on the blackwork scene. She's made a name for herself with her cherubs with weapons. I really like the style and can't wait to see how her work progresses in another year.

I also work alongside Loz Thomas (@lozthomas_tattoo) whose works speaks for itself. His use of linework is really inspiring because of the precision and attention to detail. Watching him work blows my mind and makes me up my game on a daily basis. Some of my favourites that he's done are sculpture heads and iconic red dragon tattoos.

Another artist to look out for is Tyler Hill (@tylerhill-tattoo); I really love the composition in her pieces and how her work all comes together. Again, another artist who does amazing linework! I will be guesting with her at *Pardon My French Tattoo Studio* (@pardonmyfrenchtattoo) next year, so maybe we can collaborate too!

What have you got planned for the future?

Future plans are just to keep on smashing palms and try and push the limits of what can be done in this placement. I'm really enjoying being able to travel with my work so more guest spots are definitely on the cards. *South City Market* will be visiting this years Singapore expo, *Culture Cartel*, so that is an experience I'm exited for! I'll also be spending some more time with the guys at *Der Grimm Tattoo* in Berlin at their beautiful studio so you can definitely catch me there at various points next year. Nothing is set in stone yet but trips to Canada, America and a little European tour are on the cards so watch this space for info on that!

What does tattooing mean to you?

Tattooing has always played a big part in my life and I hope it always will. Whenever I have felt stress in my life I would focus on work and the positives I find in tattooing. I've been lucky enough to make a career out of it and managed to meet kind and likeminded people along the way. ▣

BACKPIECES, SLEEVES & AND OTHER LARGE-SCALE TATTOOS

DISCOVERED AT SZCZECIN TATTOO CONVENTION
5–6 OCTOBER 2019

PHOTO CREDIT: KAMILA BURZYMOWSKA




DUBOIS 2/2019

THE ETERNAL RIVER

instagram.com/aronjohndubois
aronjohndubois.bigcartel.com
aronjohndubois@gmail.com

Through impact-laden encounters between ornamental and figural imagery, tattooist Aron Dubois has developed a self-sourced visual language that openly explores symbology, spirituality and surrealism in an effort to "drink from the eternal river" and return to what the Colorado-native defines as "the source". Drawing much of his inspiration from esoteric literature, mythic archetypes and the natural world, Dubois has spent his decade-long relationship with the craft "digging for the grail of tattooing". Here, Dubois demystifies his "optimistic escape attempt" from the addictive dangers of digital tools, and the answers he finds in nature when allowing the walls that stand between himself and the world to dissolve

SO MUCH OF YOUR WORK FEELS DRAWN FROM AN INCREDIBLY PERSONAL PLACE. CONSIDERING THIS, HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR FORMATIVE YEARS–YOUR FIRST MEMORIES OF INSPIRATION AND CREATIVITY, HAVE TRANSLATED TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH TATTOOING?

I grew up making art constantly, and my efforts were encouraged and facilitated by my parents. In my teens I did a lot of graffiti, but when I started tattooing at 18, I was more interested in ignorantly transcending the clichés of the craft with my "art", but I wasn't really grasping anything. Early on, I was showing work in galleries and I was very involved in studio practice. Tattooing seemed to be a sideline that discouraged and alienated me, and I was eventually at a crossroads with it. My tattooing was lacking and I decided that I needed to devote my efforts to it because it was paying the bills, and I left the studio world behind.

Creatively, I've always been more centred in my ideas, and I suppose the tattoos eventually became a reflection of my inclinations. It's been a long arduous process, and I've really had to grow into tattooing to appreciate the magic and mystery of it.

HAVING BEEN TUTORED IN A SPACE YOU'VE DESCRIBED AS A "POSTER-CHILD OF 90'S TATTOO STUDIOS", WHEN WERE YOU FIRST ABLE TO EXPRESS YOUR ARTISTIC IDEAS ON SKIN? DID YOU FIRST HAVE TO CUT YOUR TEETH TATTOOING MORE TRADITIONAL IMAGERY?

In the beginning, I had to cut my teeth doing walk-ins and custom fare of the like. I was never taught how to do traditional tattoos, and my apprenticeship was too misguided and brief to teach any tactile fundamentals. I had to stumble in the dark for about 5-years before anything began to have any artistic direction, and even then, it came too soon.

Words: James Musker







WHAT COMPELLED ME YEARS AGO IS ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT FROM WHAT COMPELS ME NOW

Without knowing the fundamentals, I ignorantly rendered the work muddy and overdone through my attempts to be 'artistic'. I wasn't surrounded by tattoo artists who possessed the knowledge I lacked for quite some time, so it was a lot of fumbling around in the dark. I eventually learned how primary craft is over artistry in tattooing, and once I knew my way around a tattoo, the "voice" I was looking for began to show more effectively. It has taken me a decade of tattooing to finally understand what properly works in the skin and how it ages. Now it feels as though I'm at the beginning again, completely anew and uncarved.

YOUR WORK FEELS AS IF IT'S DRAWN FROM DEEP MEDITATIONS AND CURIOSITY AS OPPOSED TO STYLISTIC FORMULA. YOU'VE CLEARLY DEVELOPED AN INCREDIBLY UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH TATTOOING HAVING APPROACHED IT IN SUCH A WAY, BUT WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO THE CRAFT?

My initial attraction to tattooing wasn't much different from many others: I was allured by the subversive taboo and aesthetic vitality, but in the early years my tastes were naive and superficial. It's hard to say what was gripping my 18-year-old mind at the time, but it probably had something to do with wanting to perpetuate my art without having to face adult responsibility. I've had to mature and grow into this craft.

What compelled me years ago is altogether different from what compels me now. It's funny, the images and symbols I found so trite and commonplace in the beginning I now find to be the primal essence of tattooing. What excites me about tattooing now is the result of an arduous accumulation and purging process, and yet I am still digging for the grail of tattooing—probably without reward!

YOU'VE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED THAT POETIC AND SPIRITUAL TEXTS INFLUENCE YOU MUCH MORE THAN ANY VISUAL ART, BUT HOW DO YOU FEEL YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH TATTOOING HAS CHANGED SINCE EMBRACING THESE INFLUENCES AND ATTEMPTING TO TRANSFER MORE ABSTRACT IDEAS TO SKIN?

Within the past few years, my sense of reality has been slowly eroding—giving me a much-needed impetus for spiritual practice. Art reflects life, and when I began to look within, both through reading and communing with nature,





ART IS A STRANGE ENERGY THAT ENCAPSULATES YOUR ENTIRE BEING, AND WHEN YOU SHARE YOUR CREATIONS YOU BECOME A BEACON FOR THAT SAME ENERGY

the work began to reflect that. I don't consciously imbue my tattooing with spirituality or attempt to convey abstract philosophic concepts, they're simply the organic by-product of my deepening inquiry into the mysteries of life. I began to have a better relationship with tattooing when the work began attracting more like-minded people who may be on a similar path, supporting and nourishing the direction I've been headed and thus validating my efforts.

Art is a strange energy that encapsulates your entire being, and when you share your creations you become a beacon for that same energy. It always amazes me to see how life can manifest things purely on your own effort and intention. It's a divinely empowering truth that we are the creators of our own reality, and it is a great gift that requires careful attention. How quickly we can be subsumed by the darkness of our thoughts, creating so much suffering. Art can help us to change our thoughts and heal our hearts—it can transform reality.

YOUR WORK FEELS BOTH ANCIENT AND ETERNAL, AND AS INFLUENCED BY HISTORY AS IT IS THE NATURAL WORLD. CAN YOU SPEAK ON HOW THESE INFLUENCES DRIVE YOUR ARTISTIC AND SPIRITUAL LIFE?

There is much to be learned from art history. After some inquiry you see that many similar archetypes and symbols repeat themselves throughout every culture on earth. Much of these symbols come from the natural world, and art becomes a mythic language that uses these symbols to deepen our understanding of life. I believe these arche-





WHEN REFERENCING NAIVE, ANCIENT, OR SPIRITUAL ART I AM TRYING TO DRINK FROM THE ETERNAL RIVER THAT FEELS SOMEWHAT BEYOND HUMAN CREATION

typal symbols possess a vitality that lends itself well to the ritualistic and symbolic aspects of tattooing.

When referencing naive, ancient, or spiritual art I am trying to drink from the eternal river that feels somewhat beyond human creation—"the source", if you will. I believe it is the desire of every human to return to said source, and the language of symbols helps get us there, be it through art, music, or literature. In being with nature, my worldly worries are assuaged and I can momentarily bathe in that divine source—dissolving the walls between myself and the world. In this state, I begin to understand man's communion with the earth and the divine, giving clarity to the symbolic language of cultures near and far, ancient and current.

YOU'VE RECENTLY INTRODUCED US TO 'SUN SONGS': A NEWSLETTER WHICH YOU DESCRIBE AS "A PERSONAL AND INTIMATE DIGEST OF NEW TATTOOING, ART, PHOTOGRAPHY AND WRITING". WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THIS PROJECT? WHAT DO YOU FEEL SELF-INITIATED PLATFORMS LIKE THIS OFFER AN ANTIDOTE TO?

'Sun Songs' was initially my naively optimistic escape attempt from the confines of social media. After sending a few newsletters out, and reading the statistics, it became pretty clear that it wasn't going to replace anything, at least not for a long time. Now, it's just more of an outlet to share things that are interesting to me in a way that feels genuine and more akin to my inherent pace. If there is any antidote, it's an antidote to the pressure I feel to incessantly share my work online just to stay afloat in







SOCIAL MEDIA CREATES AN INSTANTANEOUS METER FOR HOW WELL SOMETHING IS RECEIVED, AND IF YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR SYNTHETIC ATTENTION, IT'S AN ADDICTIVE TOOL...

people's consciousness. I rarely meet the quota, so I figure it's better to nurture the following I already have by becoming more vulnerable and letting people in. 'Sun Songs' is just that—or simply an excuse to write. I really like writing. Probably because I have verbal inadequacies. You know, the quiet type.

GIVEN HOW THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE HAS RADICALLY CHANGED HOW TATTOOING IS APPROACHED AND UNDERSTOOD, AND ALSO YOUR ON-GOING RELATIONSHIP WITH PAST-NESS, WHAT DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND PROBLEMATIC ABOUT THE CRAFT, AND THE CULTURAL CONTEXT IT EXISTS WITHIN, TODAY?

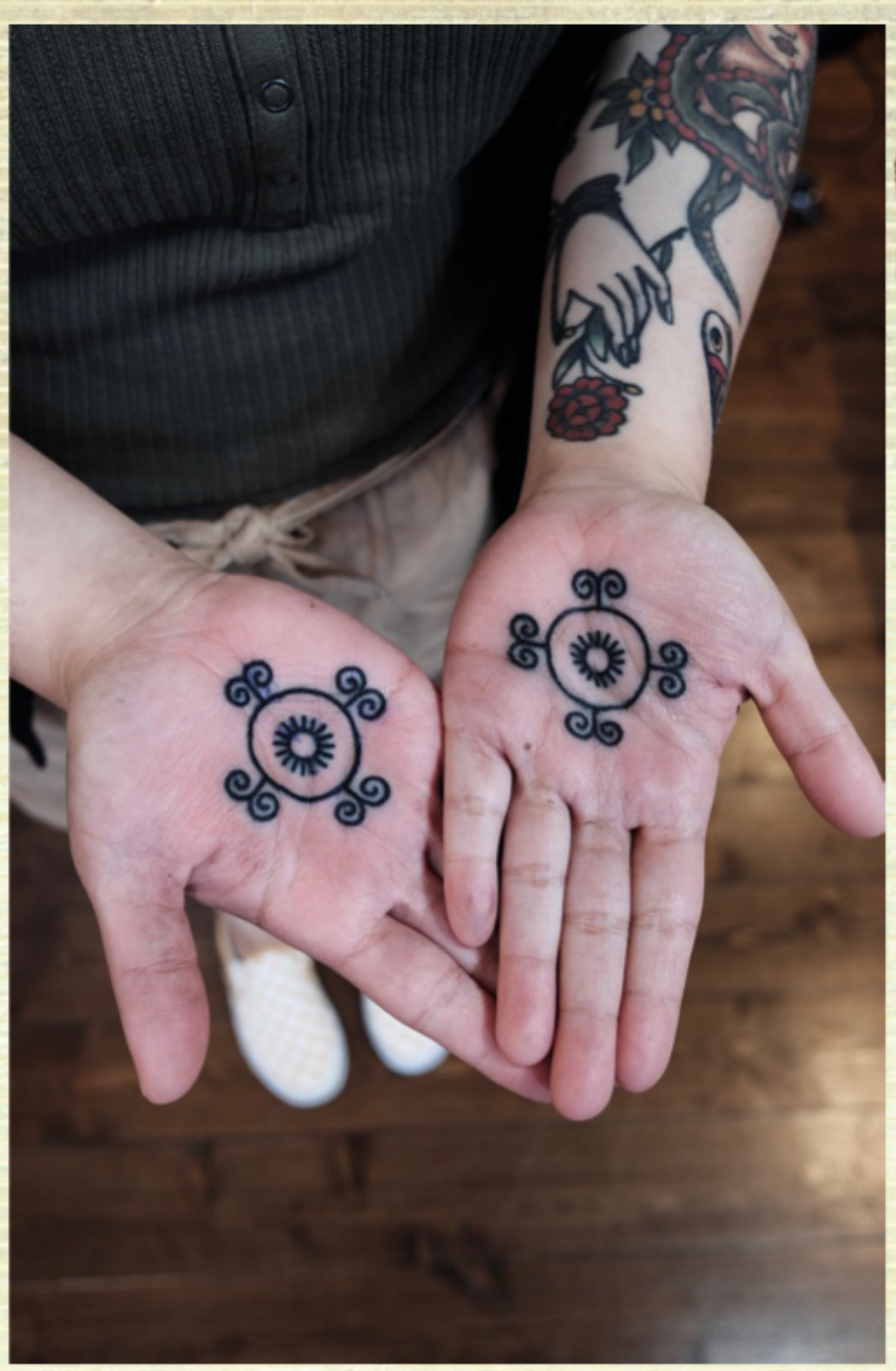
Social media creates an instantaneous meter for how well something is received, and if you're hungry for synthetic attention, it's an addictive tool. Unfortunately, the tattoos that seem to garner the most audience these days seem to be more a product of graphic design than of something hand-made. I'm blown away at how some tattoo artists present their work online. I see them blurring out the body so much so that the tattoo becomes less about the person wearing it and more about the image, and the image often looks artificial or computer generated; not on the skin at all.

Of course, that kind of thing does well online because it makes it more visually attractive, but I fear it is taking the customer away from the essence of tattooing and making it a commercial graphic art. The studios born out of this phenomenon look more like one of those "creative" office spaces with stark walls and monsteras as opposed to a tattoo shop. Tattooing is body art, not computer art! I'm probably just a luddite that can't get with the times, but boy does it twist my brain up.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, I've never been worried about making money or having a waiting list. I have done my best to simply go where the impulse is, even if I appear inconsistent or lose clientele along the way. I see so many tattooers become slaves to their own gimmicks and they absolutely loathe it because they can't detach themselves from the success it has brought them. They don't realise that they're the creators of their own clientele and that they can change it when the time calls. There's always a buffing period, but it doesn't last long and the reward does











...UNFORTUNATELY, THE TATTOOS THAT SEEM TO GARNER THE MOST AUDIENCE THESE DAYS SEEM TO BE MORE A PRODUCT OF GRAPHIC DESIGN THAN OF SOMETHING HAND-MADE

come. The audience will never want you to change, they would imprison you until death if they had it their way.

YOUR DESIGNS ARE QUITE UNCONVENTIONAL THAT YOU'D NATURALLY IMAGINE THEM TO BE NEAR-COLLAPSING IF SOMEONE WERE ONLY TO DESCRIBE THEM TO YOU, BUT EVERY PIECE OF YOURS IS PULLED-OFF SO ELEGANTLY. HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR ARTISTIC SENSIBILITIES WITH THE MORE CONSERVATIVE RESTRAINTS OF TATTOO TRADITIONS? CAN YOU SPEAK ON THE PROCESS OF BRINGING BALANCE AND ORDER TO YOUR IMAGINATION WHEN CONSIDERING SKIN AS THE CANVAS?

It's true, it is a difficult balance. Even when I am drawing flash that I consider to be 'my own', I still have to consider body placement, ageing, or a client's potential budget. It's never completely free artistically. Even the most open-minded collector still has an agenda or limited space, or both. I used to find the limitations of tattooing to be a hinderance, but I've learned that they are the defining characteristic of tattooing's aesthetic, and a favourable utility.

Now that I know my way around a tattoo better, I enjoy filtering ideas through those limits and creating something that is indigenous to the craft, not to art. Art should be saved for yourself only, in solitude, away from the contamination of others. Tattooing is more extroverted and less introspective, but you can still influence your designs with your taste and intuition. I've always been concerned with making my tattoos look emblematic and timeless to some extent, and I believe it is best to use the seemingly conservative methods and mannerisms to achieve that. I look a lot at antique tattoo photographs for reference, and I try to picture what my tattoos would look like in the context of those photos.

In my mind, I picture replacing those sailor or carnie motifs with my own, and if it seems fitting, then I believe it will look appropriate now, but I suppose anything looks more romantic in a black and white photo, doesn't it?

DO YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF TO BE BURNT-OUT ON INSPIRATION? WHAT UPLIFTS YOU DURING TIMES OF CREATIVE DROUGHT?

I'm more a victim of confusion-induced paralysis than I am of creative drought. Now, I'm so overexposed to art that it's ultimately overwhelming, and the internet has multiplied that enormously. I'm pretty hard on myself, and after receiving a visual barrage of other people's work, I feel I'm not doing as well as I could be, or that I'm doing the wrong thing. The only way I know to shirk it off is to keep my hands moving—draw, draw, draw! Working arouses the muses, providing you with their cornucopia of visions. ▣

INK+OILS

TATTOO | VAPE | E LIQUID

INK-OILS.COM

GET A ***DISCOUNT*** ON YOUR ***NEXT TATTOO***
AT OUR ***TAMWORTH BASED*** TATTOO SHOP
WHEN YOU QUOTE "SKIN DEEP"
BOOK NOW VIA OUR WEBSITE



@BECKYBOOTSTATTOO
MANDALA | DOTWORK | GEO
TATTOO SPECIALIST

UNIGRAPH

Original Thermal Copier

Instant image transfer - no more tracing
Complies with full EU Safety regulations
UK Warranty from Unigraph



Delivery and product demonstration
can be arranged at no extra cost.

For all further information please contact
Unigraph Telephone: 0114 275 2801
Email: sales@unigraph.co.uk

Unigraph (UK) Limited, Unigraph House
Pitsmoor Road, Sheffield S3 9AS

Unigraph is the sole UK importer and
distributor of this German made product

S8 TATTOO INNOVATIVE TATTOO SYSTEM BRIDGING ART & TECHNOLOGY

We are proud to distribute the new S8 stencil range of products.

S8's Red Stencil Paper is the first impact and thermal-ready red stencil paper made specifically for tattooing.

Combine Red Tattoo Stencil Paper with other S8 products, such as the Red Tattooing Gel and Red Tattoo Stencil Transfer Solution, for impeccable results and optimal longevity.

VISIBLE
Red - Better Visibility When Lining Means Increased Speed and Precision

DURABLE
Gels - Longer Lasting Stencils and Protection for Your Client's Skin

SATURATION
Gels - Faster and More Uniform Ink Saturation

8™

www.thermalcopier.co.uk



The SERPENTS of BIENVILLE

SEAN HERMAN'S TRANSFORMATIVE TATTOO

"There is probably nothing more menacing or dangerous than an individual who is devoid of compassion or empathy. When this individual is permitted by community apathy and bias to successfully cloak himself in the attire of one who claims allegiance to his or her Creator, it becomes the moral imperative of those who lay witness to the peril to step up before it is too late. Until such a time when domestic violence and sexual assault are eradicated for good, the perpetrators of these deplorable acts will continue to cause unspeakable harm as Evil's welcomed ambassadors and Tyranny's strongest ally."

SAHAR ABDULAZIZ, THE BROKEN HALF

I began writing the Transformative Tattoo articles almost five years ago. I wanted to bring to light the ideas at play within the scientific existence of a tattoo; expelling the idea of its permanence, and exploring the changes living with it has on those wearing the tattoo. In that time period my own life transformed. I was fortunate to start a family, I got sober, and I began to grapple with my mental health. Through these experiences my vantage point for my world view began to



change; the witch trials, the oppression, and the difficulty others were suffering with truly began to come to light through the fog I had been living in. In order to begin to make sense of anything I had to accept that my world view was erroneous, I was taught incorrect ideas through the years, and I needed to change. The road to change could only begin by listening to those around me. As I listened to the perspectives that my clients explained to me, I began to see a completely different point of view, a truly frighten-



I HAD TO ACCEPT THAT MY WORLD VIEW WAS ERRONEOUS, I WAS TAUGHT INCORRECT IDEAS THROUGH THE YEARS, AND I NEEDED TO CHANGE.

ing picture came to light. I had been wrong for 37 years, and for 37 years I helped contribute to oppression of those around me, even though I didn't truly realise it at the time.

One comparison I've heard about my viewpoint of privilege is comparing it to a fish in water. A fish lives its life in water, water is the only thing it knows. If you tell you fish that there is life outside of water, it doesn't understand. Privilege has the same effect. Living a life of privilege is living in the water, and so many won't listen about the world outside of it. I am a white male of privilege, and I was taught wrong. Women are raised being told to protect themselves. They are told to dress modestly, "don't give men a reason to go after you." Women were taught not to walk around alone, even going to the bathroom with a friend. They were taught to guard themselves and protect themselves. As a white male, I was taught that the world is my oyster and to aggressively go after anything I want. Through the guiding light of pop culture and film, I was taught that if you are persistent and never stop going after the girl, she will eventually be "yours", no matter how many "no's" you get in the process. I was taught to never back down, and to never accept "no" for an answer.

I was taught wrong.

People of colour were taught to protect each other and to not draw attention to themselves. People of colour were taught that if you work really hard, you can eventually support yourself and make a living, as long as you stay in line and don't rock the boat, don't break the rules that you didn't get to create. As a white male I was taught that if you envision it, it can be yours. I was taught that the sky is the limit, you can be the best at anything you do, all you have to do is try. I was taught to rock the boat, and to break the rules. I was taught that the world was mine for the taking, no matter who claimed ownership first.

I was taught wrong.

I was taught that privilege was a dirty word, and that I worked to get where I am, and that it had nothing to do with the colour of my skin, my gender, or my sexuality. I was taught wrong. I began having conversations with my clients, asking them questions, and just listening. The first step to any form of change is to listen and then begin to apply it to your life. As a tattooist I have spent years



reworking, changing, or covering up tattoos that marked unhealthy viewpoints and life experiences. I love the idea of helping someone show the growth they are making, altering the mark that used to signify something negative and reworking it to show growth, helping their journey to a positive future. Tattooing has been such a huge part of my life for so long, and now it's helping reshape my thinking about the world around me, along with what my part is in it.

Revisiting the article from last month, we began to discuss two positive changes that can happen, both through the eyes of the sacred craft of tattooing. First let's examine the lesson learned from the Māori, respect for our community. Māori facial and body tattooing is known as Tā moko. An ancient art form, its origin lies in West Polynesia. The intricate designs were chiseled into the skin using a tool called an uhi; ink was then smudged into the carved lines. Tā moko represents the wearer's family heritage and social status—it is believed that the receiver visits a spiritual realm where they encounter their ancestors, returning as a new person. These tattoos help the wearer develop identity, a respect developed for the history they came from.

WOMEN WERE TAUGHT NOT TO WALK AROUND ALONE, EVEN GOING TO THE BATHROOM WITH A FRIEND...

When speaking with vice.com on receiving her Tā moke, Nanain Mahuta says:

"There were a number of milestones in my life, and it felt right to mark them in a way that is a positive statement about my identity, who I am, where I come from, and the contribution I want to continue to make. When I got it done, I felt incredibly calm. I felt like it had always been there."

The power behind a tattoo lies with the intention of the wearer. For many of my clients their tattoos become an amulet or armour, protecting them from the chaos of the surrounding worlds, reminding them of the strength they have to continue through. For many they begin to develop identity through these marks, learning about the history of their families and the generations that came before them, all leading up to the life they are currently living. Strength for oppressed peoples and cultures comes from





an acknowledgment of their identity; for them it's to embrace who they are, for myself it is to respect and honour who they communicate they are to me. As an ally I am here to be the shoulders for them to stand on, aiding in any way I am able their ability to tell the world stories I could never experience, not for me to try to summarise it or say it for them. My job is to shut my mouth, listen, and respect the identity in which they live.

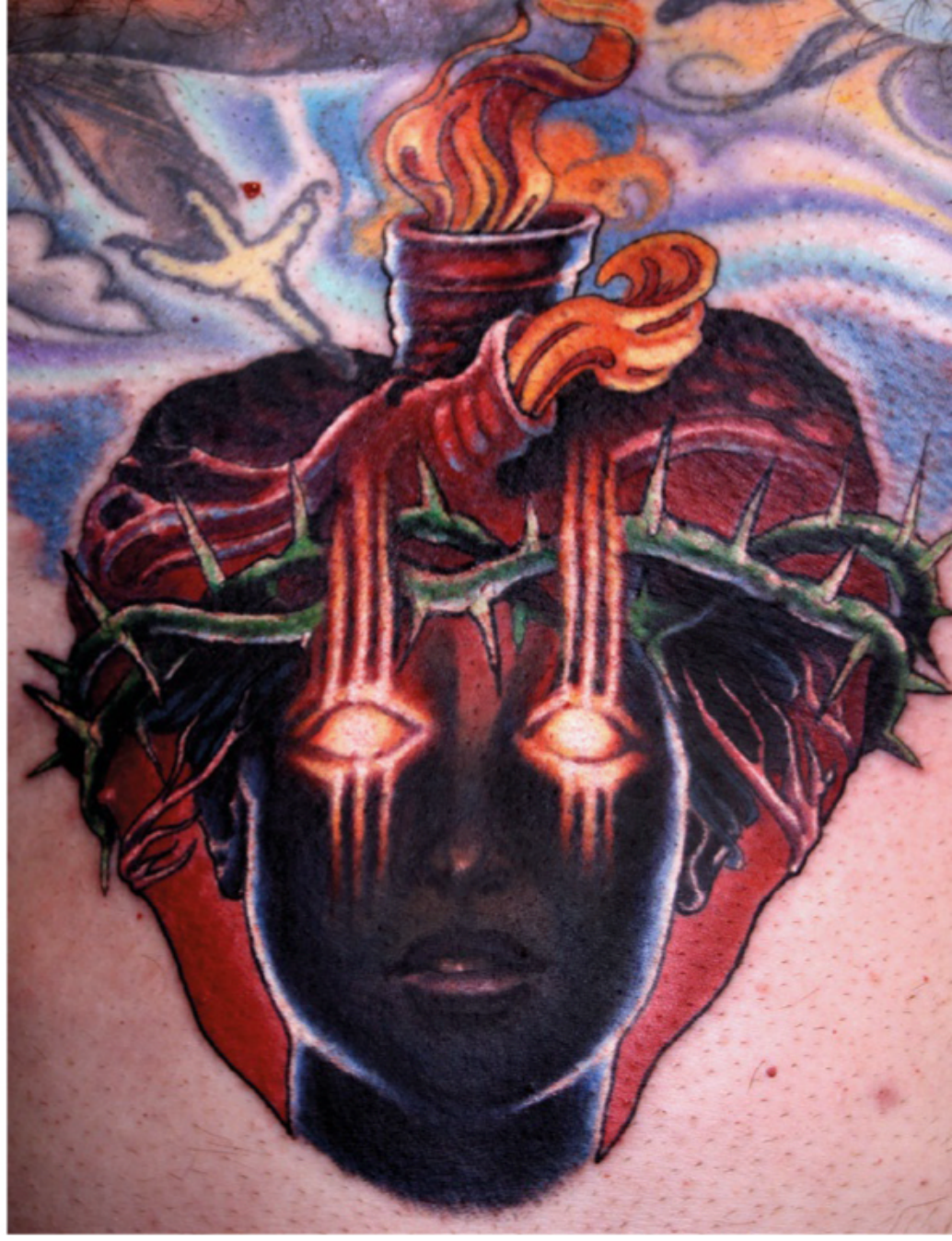
Just as other's explore their identity in history, family, and the strengths they summoned to get through oppressive histories, I have to be honest and explore my own history and identity, along with the privileges it has granted me over the years. I have never had to face the experiences that so many have, I can't even begin to fathom what it would be like to have to live in a way that involves constant vigilance for one's own protection. I can walk down the street without fear that I am going to be attacked for my appearance, or assaulted and kidnapped based on my gender. Worse yet, there are stories I have heard from clients about being forced into relationships and unhealthy situations because of a power dynamic created by society; a society that is gaslighting and torturing people daily. My personal everyday safety is a concern I have never had to think about, let alone falling into something like human trafficking, but for many it is their reality, losing their representative identity.

Last month we spoke about the atrocities of human trafficking. Ally Burke and her husband, Morgan, started Shielding Survivors Tattoo to connect survivors of sex trafficking with tattoo shops to offer free coverups. Morgan Young, a victim services training officer within the Wisconsin Department of Justice, spoke about branding at the recent event hosted by Shielding Survivors. Young told AP news about the tattooing that exists in this climate, "We see a lot of tattoos around loyalty or the name of the trafficker," Young said. "Sometimes it's something as blatant as barcodes or money signs saying that person is for sale." Tattoos are believed to be permeant, but permanence does not mean unchangeable. Covering up tattoos is a huge part of our craft; to take something that means a world of oppression for one person and create a world of survival is an incredible feat and an honour. This same energy can be used for my road to change.

Covering up a tattoo involves a mixture of methods learned over time from experiences and choices. The first step is to take a good long look at the existing tattoo and then communicate with the client, asking what they want from this experience. Perhaps they don't want the entire tattoo gone, or it was the meaning of the word tattooed on them that needed to evolve, or they wanted to show an incredible growth from the traumatic experience tied to the tattoo.

We then look at what can be used from that existing tattoo in their skin to create this new era of their life; how we can we manipulate and reimagine the tattoo, not only getting rid of the old idea, but using aspects of it to create a new mark of proliferation and change. We aren't trying to cover something and create an unhealthy denial of its existence; but instead we are trying to show the growth







THERE ARE STORIES I HAVE HEARD FROM CLIENTS ABOUT BEING FORCED INTO RELATIONSHIPS AND UNHEALTHY SITUATIONS BECAUSE OF A POWER DYNAMIC CREATED BY SOCIETY

from trauma into something new and hopefully constructive for their future. Maybe it's my obsession and love of tattooing, but I think this exact formula could be used in changing my mindset, the mindset of the privileged, to help us be an ally to our community.

The way I was taught by society about my place in it was wrong and unhealthy, creating a mark in my flesh that I would use as a guide over the years, citing it as the reasoning for making continued unhealthy decisions. "That's the way that my parents did it, that's what men do" or "That's how my heroes did it, they were manly men taking what they wanted, and not taking "no" for an answer". Just as the needle has to cause pain and push through the skin, I have to dig deep and try to understand where the mindsets that I have truly came from. As painful as it may be, taking a deep look at myself, breaking through the protective barrier of skin, I can begin to rework the marks I have created, transforming my negative, self-serving world view into one that can be a hand in support and change.

One aspect to the art of reworking tattoos is that it takes time. After each session there is a healing process, then we take a look as how everything settled and were the next session should go. To change oneself we go through a similar process, a process that takes time to get it right. You can try to cover up a tattoo in one shot, but as it heals, you may see the remnants of the old coming through. You have to take time to do it right, session after session; which means that changing our world view won't happen over night, but it is possible. I have to remember that each experience I have with someone gives that opportunity, as long as I listen, show respect, and work at my own change, then I can be the kind of ally needed in this polarised world, and hopefully an aid to oppressed peoples and culture that deserve freedom today. ▣

BACKPIECES, SLEEVES & AND OTHER LARGE-SCALE TATTOOS

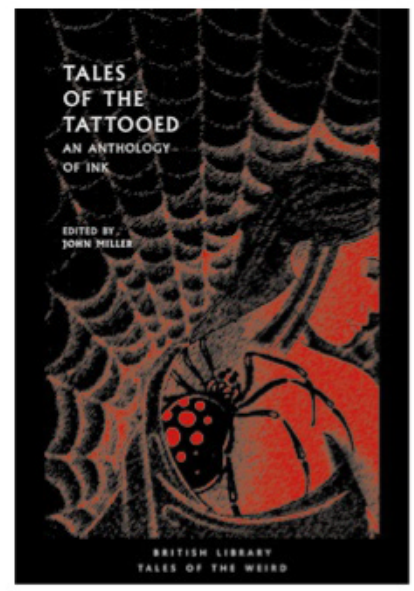
DISCOVERED AT SZCZECIN TATTOO CONVENTION
5–6 OCTOBER 2019

PHOTO CREDIT: KAMILA BURZYMOWSKA

REVIEW

TALES OF THE TATTOOED

Edited by John Miller
317 Pages · Paperback
ISBN: 978-0-7123-5345-8
£8.99
Published by: British Library · www.bl.uk



This is a peculiar but pretty essential collection if you're into literature that brings tattooing in as the main reason for the story to be. I have always considered myself well read but here, John Miller has dragged up some names from history I've never heard of—and think I should. James Payn? His playground was the late 1800s and he was admired by Dickens, Conan Doyle and Henry James. What kind of a rock have I been living under? Given that his story, 'Two Delicate Cases', deals with possibly the earliest known fictional case of how to deal with a cover-up, I'm sold from very early on with the books concept.

There's a few stories in here you might be familiar with if you're a big reader. Roald Dahl's 'Skin' probably being the most famous, but even that dates back to 1952 when it was edgy and a real outsider pastime to be writing about tattooing. For the record, Dahl wrote a lot of 'grown-up' fiction about a lot of strange things—he's a great lesson in how some of your best work can be overshadowed in the extreme by work that's simply more popular.

Of all the curios on board here, 'The Tattooed Leg' is maybe the most peculiar. It's not very long at all, is written by John Chilton (back in 1919 and appears to be the only thing he ever wrote) and concerns a missing leg (natch) while channeling some kind of Frankenstein vibe in its scant couple of thousand words.

These thirteen stories are a real kick in the pants, not least because nobody writes about tattooing in the same way they were able in the last century. We are desensitised to it for the most part and it certainly contains no shock value these days to launch upon the innocent reader. That said, this is a wonderful, intelligent collection from a time in which writers had to actually be able to write to be published and I have no doubt it took more than a few weeks to pull together and siphon the stories actually worth publishing out of a somewhat barren historical pile.

Sion Smith

PHONE CASE GIVEAWAY!



By means of a chance meeting with some kindly public relations people, we blagged a very cool black Mophie iPhone Juice Pack Access case for one very singular reader... and it's not your average phone case either:

Suitable only for the iPhone X or XS, the case is capable of jamming an extra 31 hours of juice into your phone and if you've ever been caught wanting in the battery department (that's like 99% of us, right?) this might be a pretty decent answer to your problems—and if your iPhone annoys the hell out of you that you can't listen and charge at the same time anymore, this will solve all your problems when you're on the road.

It's sitting right here on the shelf, so if you're in need of such a sex machine (that actually does a fantastic job of even just being a phone case), head over to skindeep.co.uk/competitions and drop in the word MOPHIE as your answer. We'll choose a winner at random and it will be in the mail before you know it.



Lucie Richardson

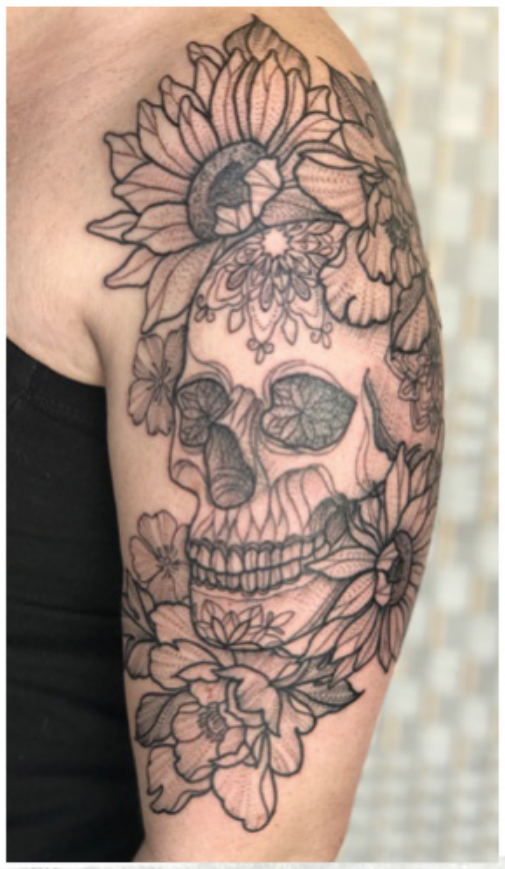
THIS IS PERSONAL

It's been at least six years since we messed up around here. Ain't no two ways about it or excuses, last issue we plain and simple made a mistake by mixing up the working folders of Lucie Richardson and Amy Whiting. Thus, to put it right for Lucie, Amy, their clients and potential clients along with our own sanity, the next few pages contain a reprint of those pages. Apologies all round guys.



Amy Whiting

No matter how popular they become, subjectivity will continue to make tattoos one of the most unique artforms in the world, with one truth continually at their core... that no two stories will ever be the same. Here, we revisit some of these stories, fresh outta the UK tattoo world. Tattoo-maker and tattoo-wearer talk side-by-side about what these pieces of work mean to them personally, highlighting the sheer power of the individuality of the tattoo experience. Even the tattoo decisions made with little emotion (the ones we choose 'just because we like them'), epitomise the timeless truth that reaction to art will always be subjective









LUCIE RICHARDSON

Gunz N Ink, Stowmarket, Suffolk
Instagram @lucietattoo

"I WOULD HATE FOR SOMEONE TO LEAVE HAVING FELT LIKE THEY'D NOT HAD A GOOD EXPERIENCE"

This baking-themed tattoo was created for Rose about a month ago. I also love to bake so this was great subject matter for me! Rose always brings her incredible baked creations into the shop for us so it really added another dimension to be able to create this for her when I've experienced first hand how talented she is. It's always nice to design something for someone when you know it has a personal meaning - it's rewarding when you know a customer has planned for a long time and is trusting you to create.
I love to chat to my customers whilst I'm working and find out about them - I would hate for someone to leave having felt like they'd not had a good experience. It's always interesting to find out the stories behind their tattoo ideas, whether it's a birth flower for a loved one or to commemorate a holiday, each tattoo has a meaning to that person... or sometimes, they just really like roses! Either way, I am so happy that they've trusted me to immortalise that design for them.
I think to most people, their first few tattoos have meaning and depth - sometimes they feel that they HAVE to have this, to justify getting something on their body for ever. Then the more tattoos they have, the less they feel they have to add meaning to it and sometimes they get tattooed just because they like the artwork.







ROSE: TATTOOS CAN BRING SO MANY PEOPLE TOGETHER FROM SUCH VAST BACKGROUNDS AND CULTURES”

Baking is something I have always enjoyed - there is something so satisfying about gathering a few simple ingredients and creating something delicious that makes people smile and happy. Baking is integral to my life, it gives me a chance to switch off from daily life and worries and takes me away. I wanted a tattoo to remind me that baking makes me happy, helps me relax and unwind and most importantly, makes other people happy!

After suffering from anxiety, depression and body-confidence issues for the majority of my life, getting tattooed was a huge deal for me. I am so much more confident with tattoos now, I love showing them off and I do tell people their meaning if they ask. I think it is amazing that tattoos can bring so many people together from such vast backgrounds and cultures. When you have tattoos, no matter their style or meaning, you instantly have common ground with someone else with tattoos, endless conversation about past work, planned work and cover ups.

Getting tattooed has become a massive part of my life. Lucie has given me the confidence to express myself through the beautiful designs she creates. Travelling to the right tattooist for you is so important - never settle for second best! The tattoo is going to be there for life and finding the right art and artist for you is key.







AMY WHITING

Black Moon Tattoos, Frome, Somerset
inkandwilderness.co.uk / Instagram @inkandwilderness

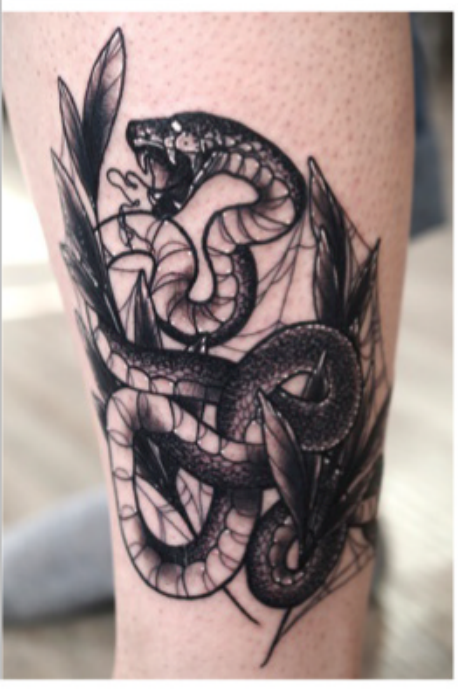
"TATTOOS WILL ALWAYS BE A DEEPLY PERSONAL THING"

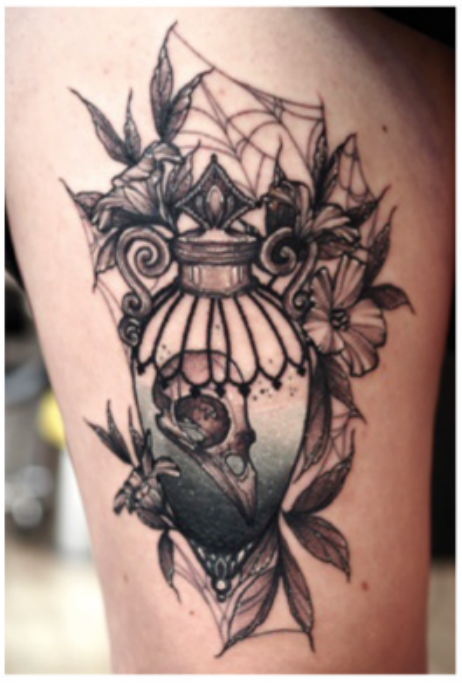
I did this cat skull for Mary back in July. This tattoo is memorable for me as it was a bit of a turning point - I felt like I was coming into my own style... a bit darker on the shading front, bolder and more contrasted. It is also features a lot of my favourite subject matter: skulls, mushrooms and creepy botanicals. I've always been hugely inspired by nature and the macabre and I enjoy bringing both of these elements together.

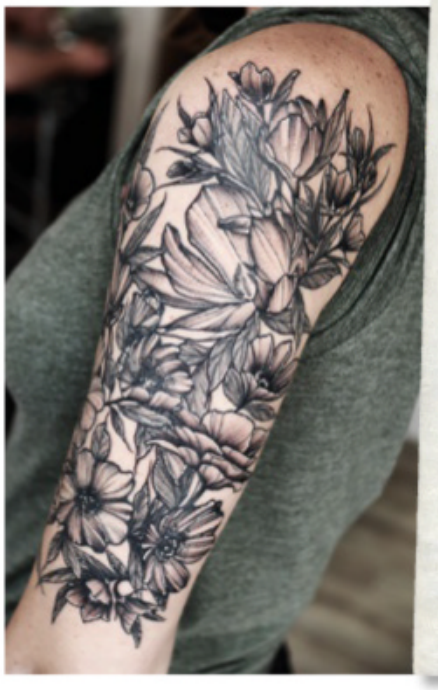
For the most part at the design stage, I don't know a great deal about my customer's experiences and motivations. This is usually something that we chat about on the day while they're being tattooed. Sometimes (a bit like me) they're just getting the tattoo because they like it. Other times, if it's something specific, for example a memorial tattoo, it's nice to know beforehand so I can take this into account while drawing the design. It also helps me to know what kind of tone our session might take and if they might want to discuss the reasons they're getting the tattoo or not.

I definitely think that some people come to get tattooed because of their own life experiences, whether that's travelling, relationships, places and (sometimes sadly) loved ones passing away. For the most part I find that people come to me to get tattooed because they like the style of what I'm doing, or the subject matter. Frequently these two things meet and the subject of the tattoo is a reminder of a memory or something more personal, especially with a custom tattoo. Tattoos will always be a deeply personal thing and each person's choices will be as unique as they are.









MARY-JANE: "I DON'T REALLY SIT AND REFLECT TOO MUCH ON A NEW TATTOO NOW"

Tattoos remain personal and unique even though they have grown in popularity. I'm actually glad that tattooing has become more popular, as it has increased the acceptance of them (at least for me) and I love talking about tattoos with other tattooed people. Both the look and meaning of the tattoo are important to me, I like my tattoos to be visually pleasing but the meaning wouldn't change if the design was smaller, for example. Then again, not all of my tattoos have meaning. I don't really sit and reflect too much on a new tattoo now, but I used to when I first started getting tattoos. This tattoo doesn't really have a personal meaning, but I adore cats and all things taxidermy, so I thought a combination of these would make a great spooky tattoo."

Scenes from

SZCZECIN TATTOO CONVENTION

5-6 October, 2019

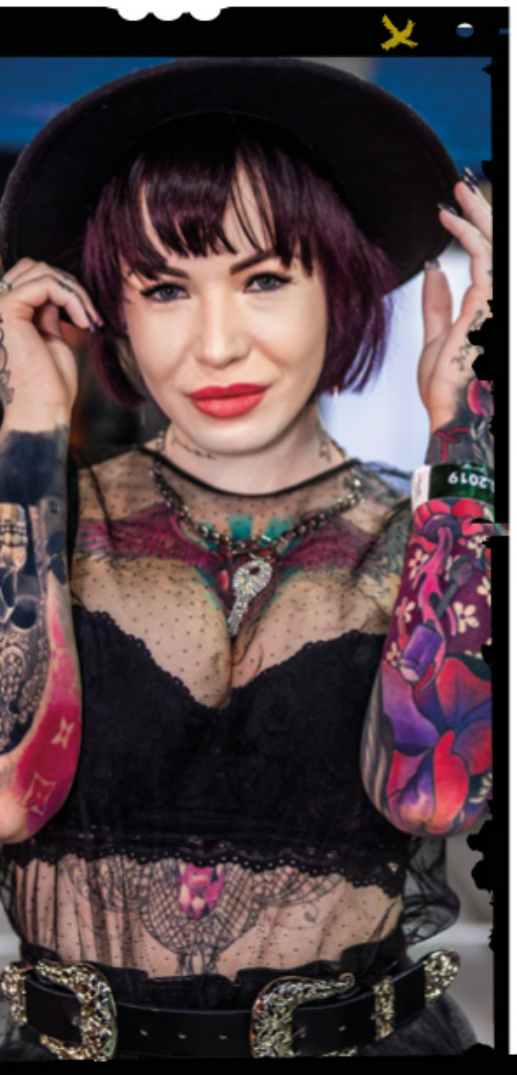
These shows from Eastern Europe just keep on coming. This month, we take a look at the work and entertainment from Szczecin Tattoo Convention. While not a monster show in the grand scheme of things, there's certainly a huge amount to offer the travelling tattoo fan. Now in its fourth year and with a steady footfall of about three and half thousand visitors, it's not to be sniffed at and if the work on display here is anything to go by—shot by Kamila Burzymowska—then it's most certainly a show you should have on your international radar.

Next issue...we bring you scenes from the mighty Brussels Convention!

Bring it.

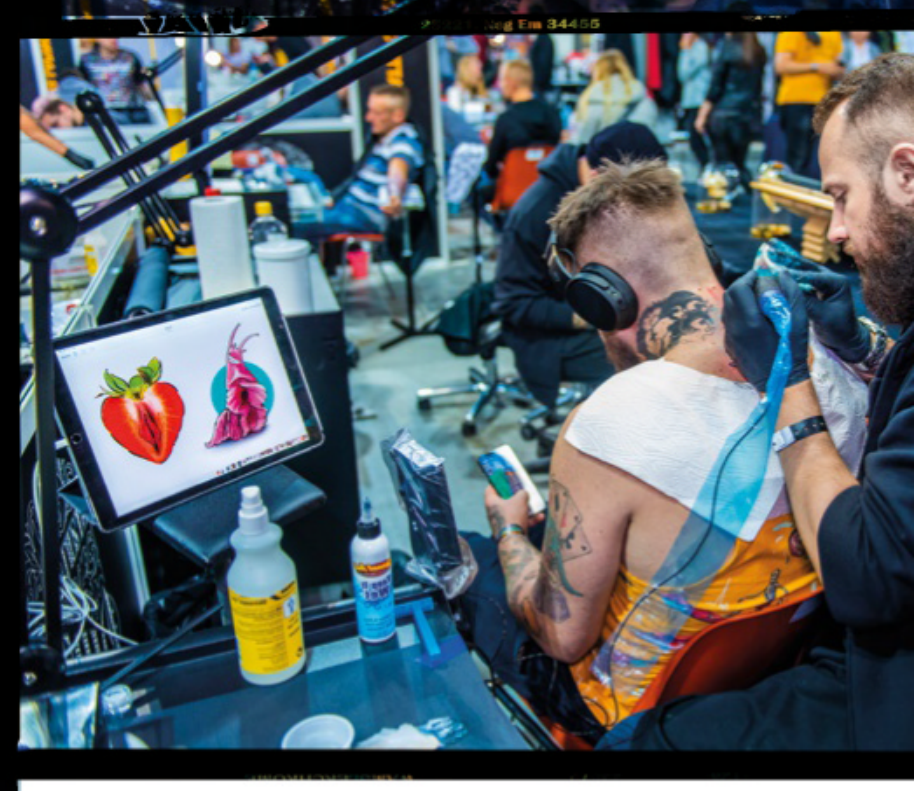
IMAGES: Kamila Burzymowska





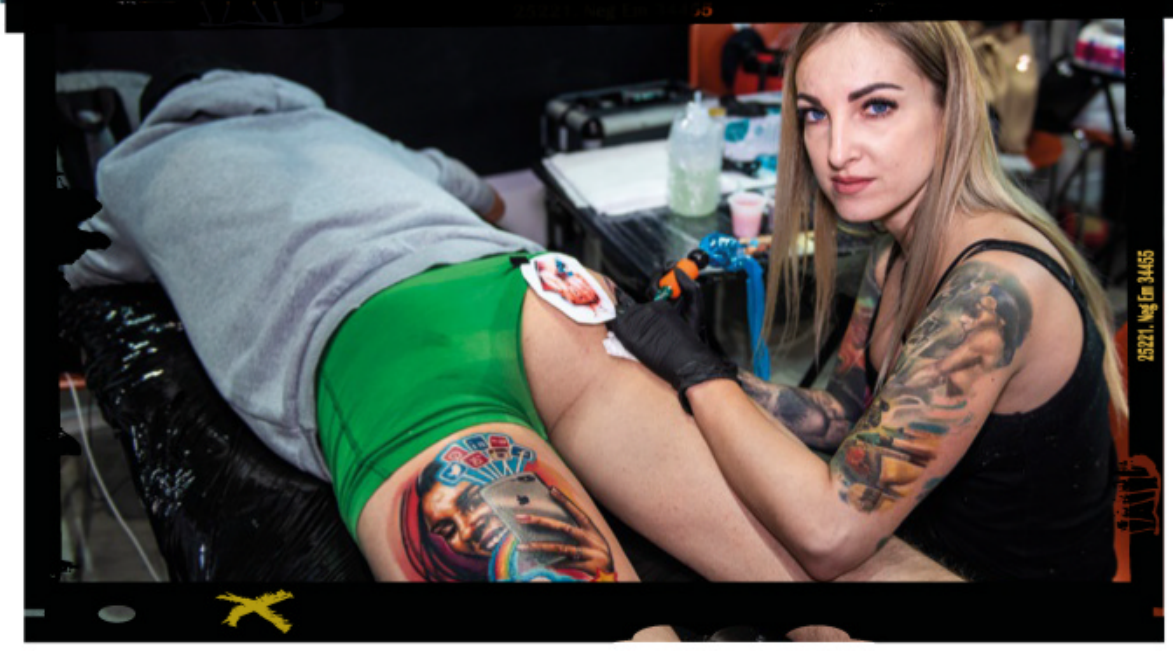

SZCZECIN
TATTOO
Convention
SKIN PROJECT





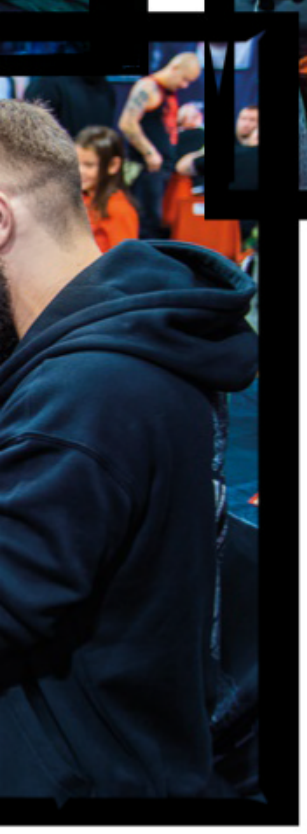



50


25221. Vogt Em 34455








30.







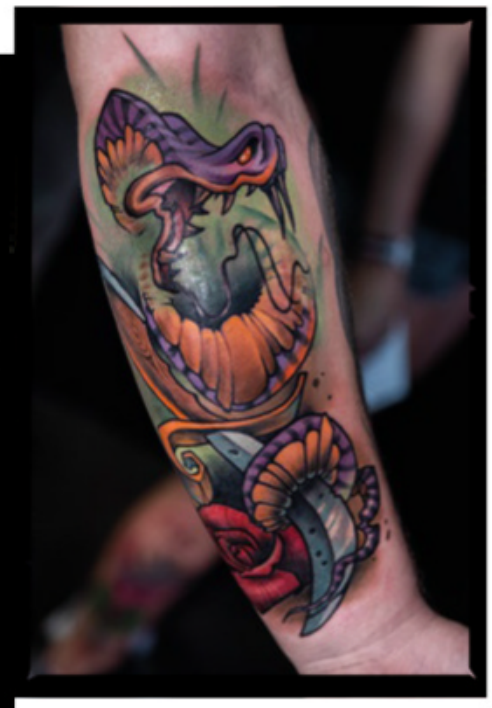



9









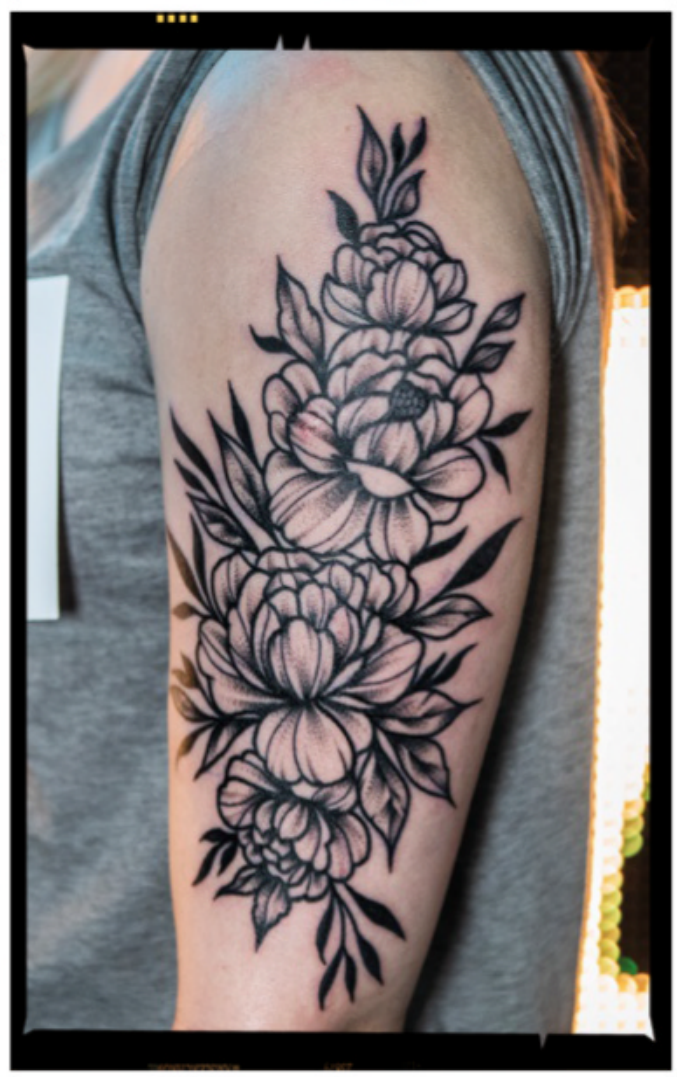




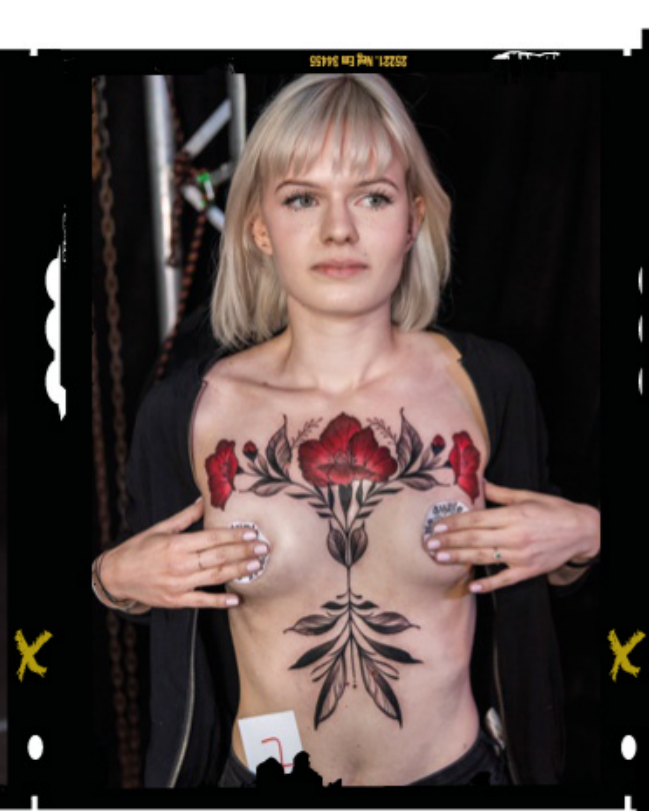

ROUTE
66


VANITAS

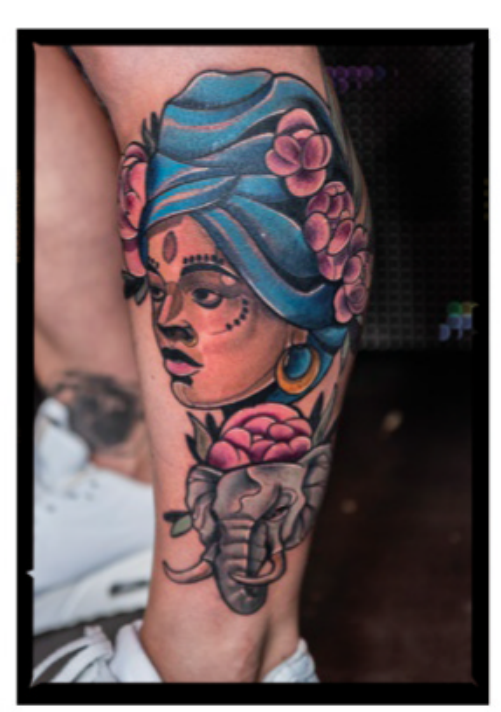

MARVEL

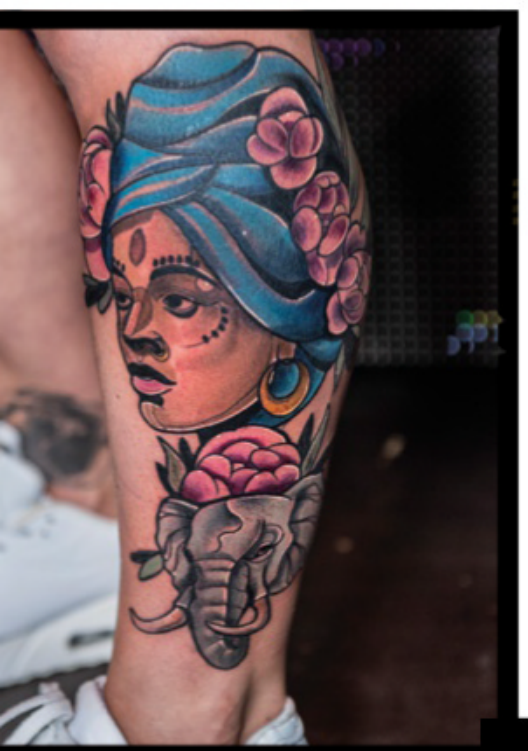













TEN TATUAŻ
ZA 500+



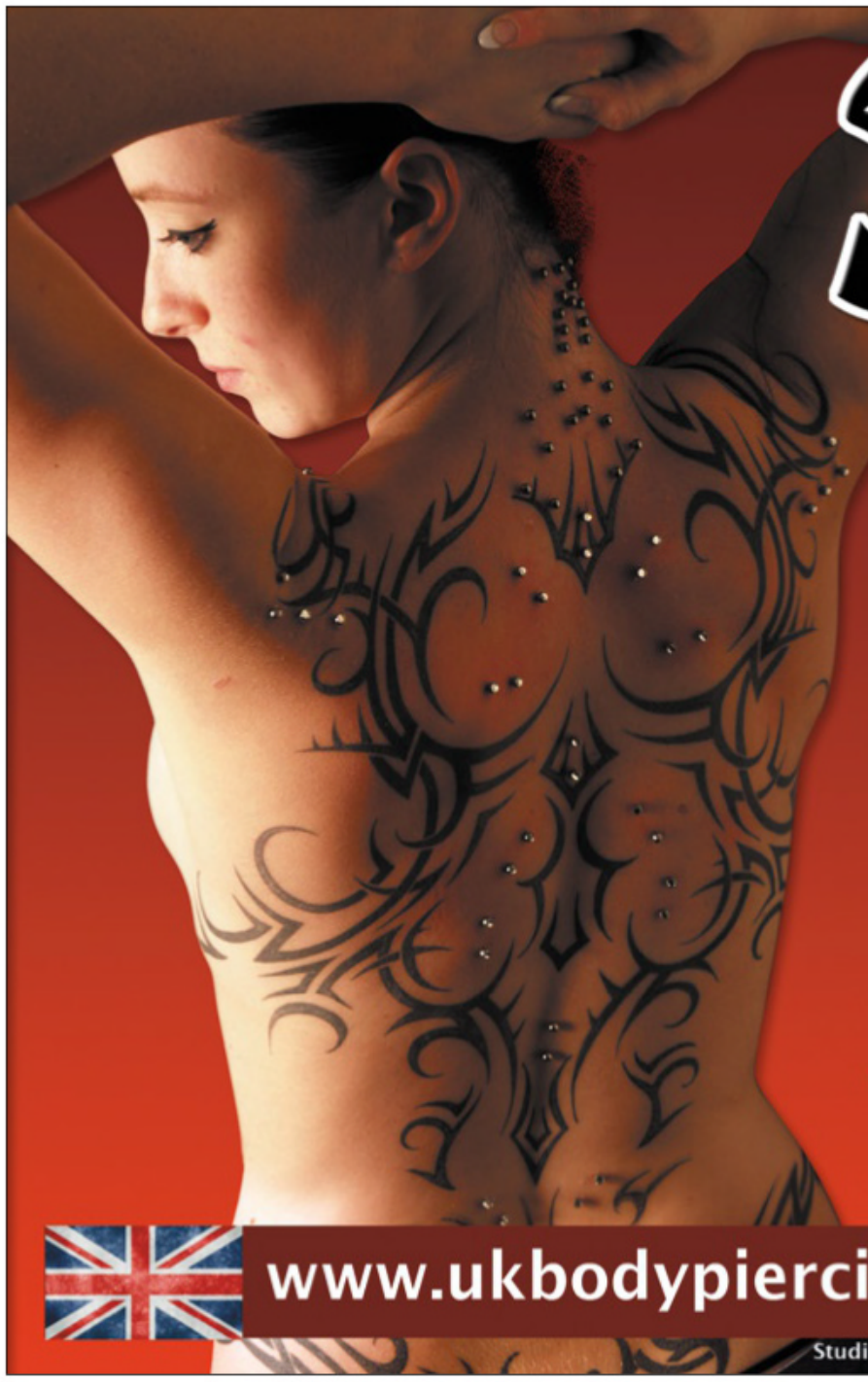









ENERGY
TRAKO DELIKATNE



Studio 18
Body Jewellery

The complete one stop solution for all your Professional Body Piercing needs



Quality titanium & surgical steel body jewellery and medical supplies direct from the country's leading specialist supplier

tel: 0116 286 2376

email: dave@studio18ltd.co.uk

STRICTLY TRADE ONLY

Check out our mobile website



www.ukbodypiercingsupplies.co.uk

Studio 18 Body Jewellery 28a Townsend Road, Enderby Leicester LE19 4PG

The UK's favourite tattoo magazine is available on iPad, iPhone and Android devices



www.skindeep.co.uk

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

Available on the App Store | GET IT ON Google play | Available on kindle fire

Skin Deep is available on iPad, iPhone, Kindle Fire and a mix of other Android devices.*

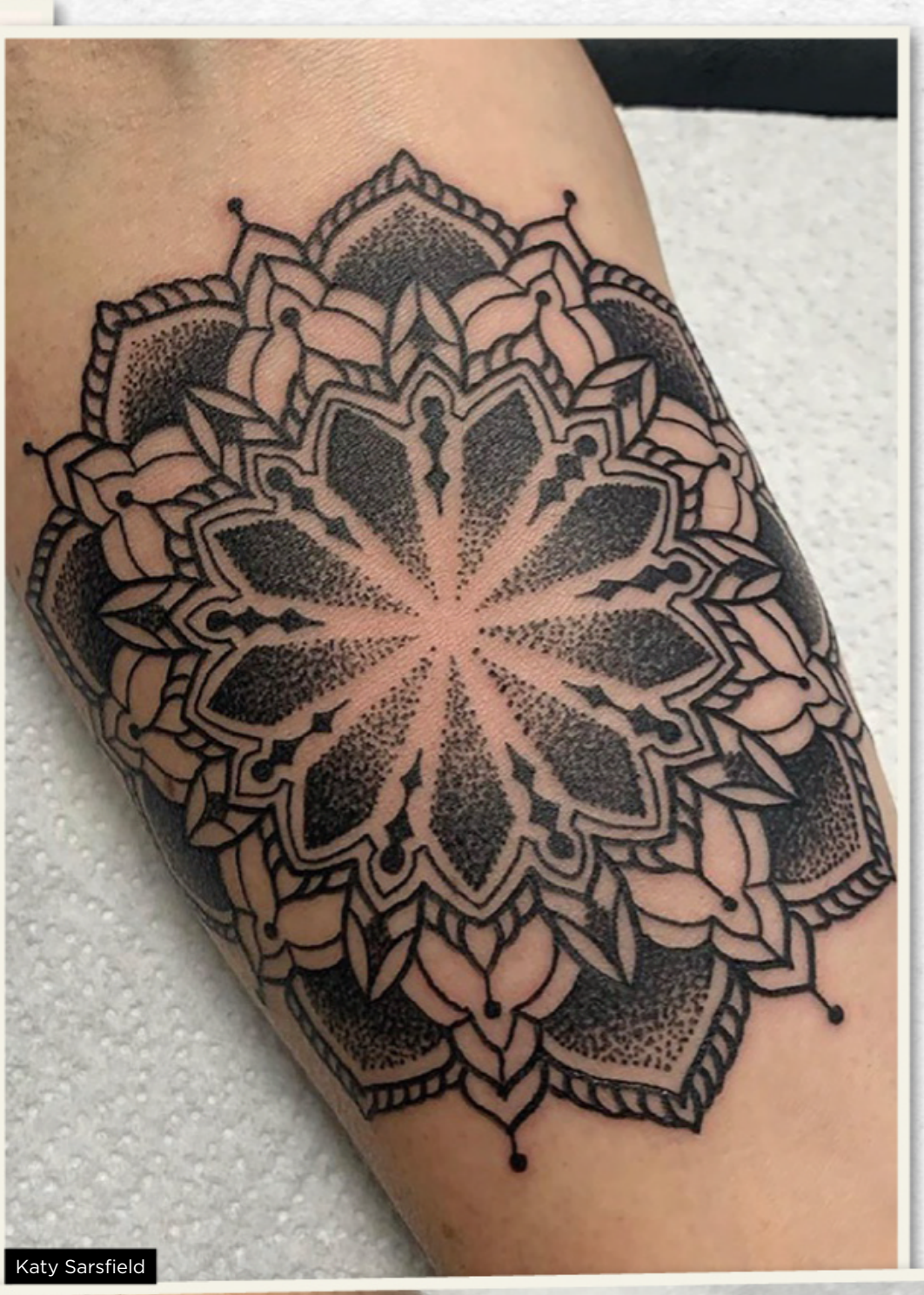
* To see if your Android device is compatible with the app, download the free issue.

SkinShots

Dale McGovern



Aaron Cooper



Katy Sarsfield



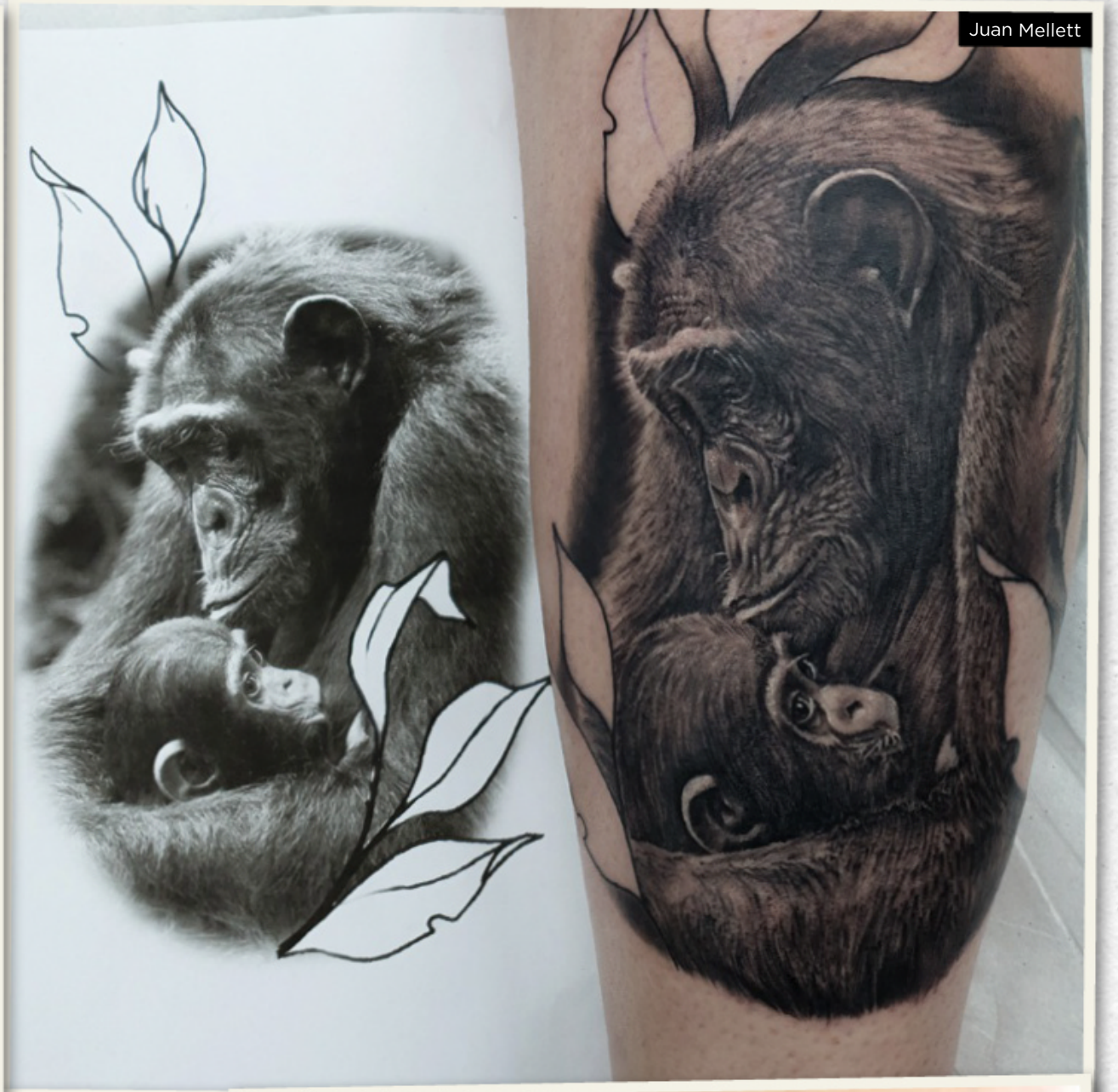
Kat Wilson



Duncan Fyfe



Kat Wilson



Juan Mellett



Katy Sarsfield



Martin Brooks



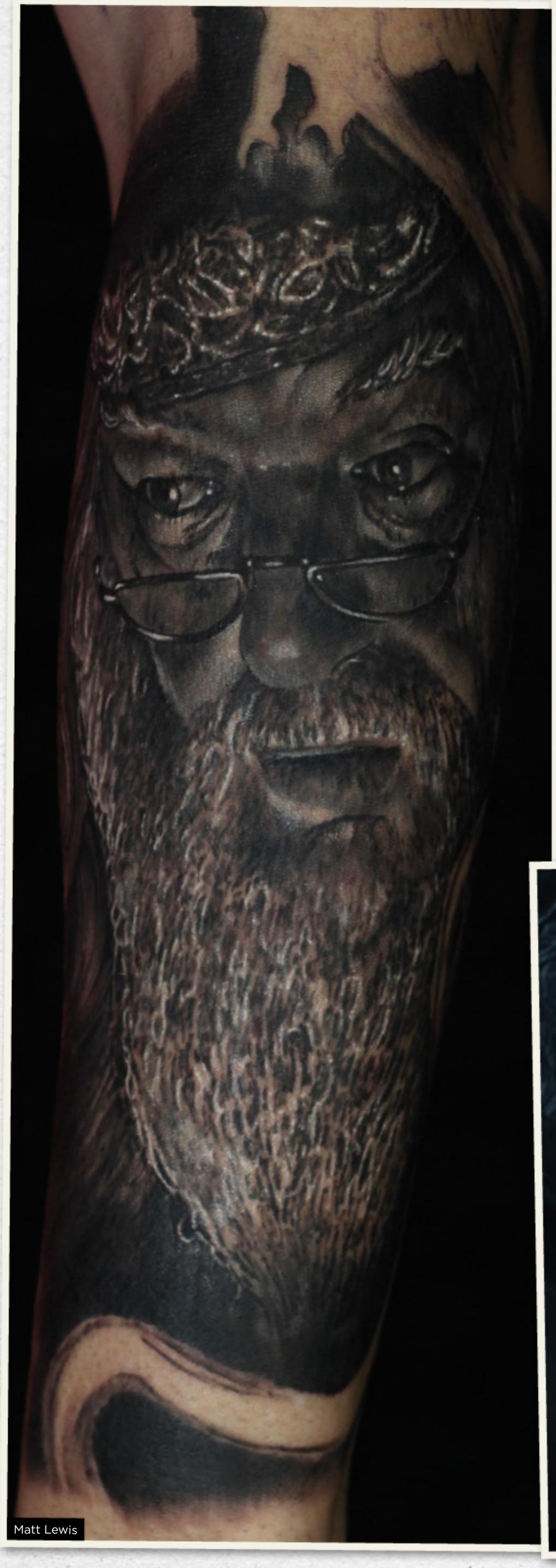
Courtney Young


Sarah Davies


Martin Brooks


Duncan Fyfe


Matt Lewis



Matt Lewis



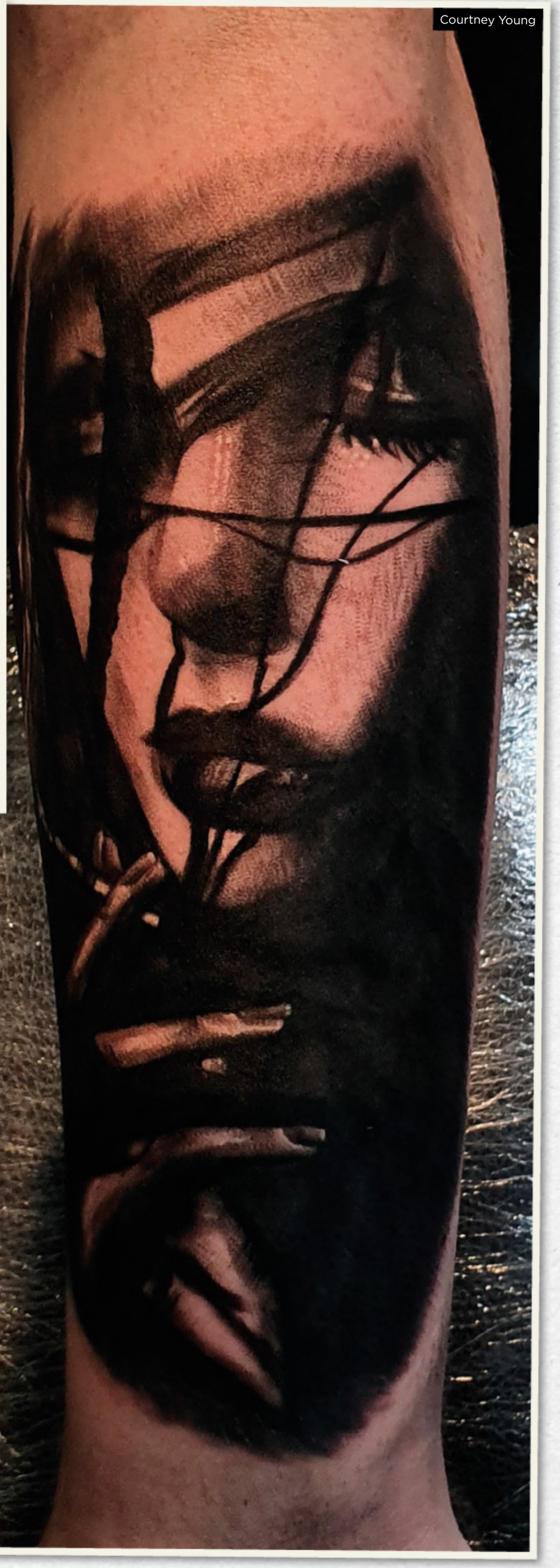
Trawa Tattoo



Shaun Maddy



Sarah Davis



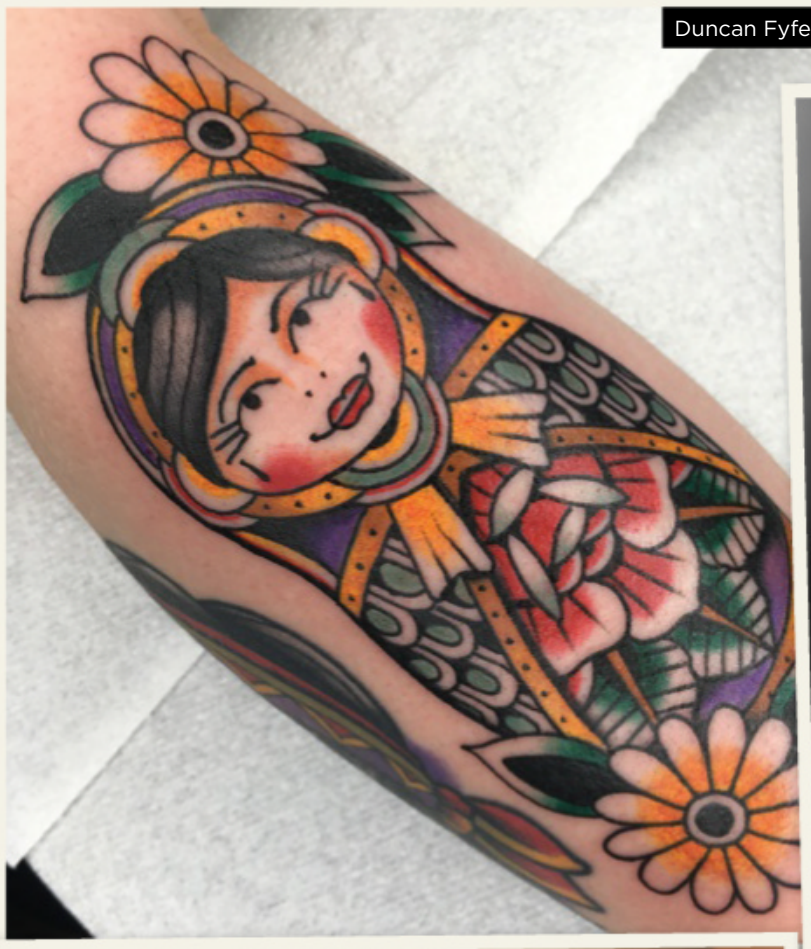
Courtney Young



Scott Don



Kat Wilson



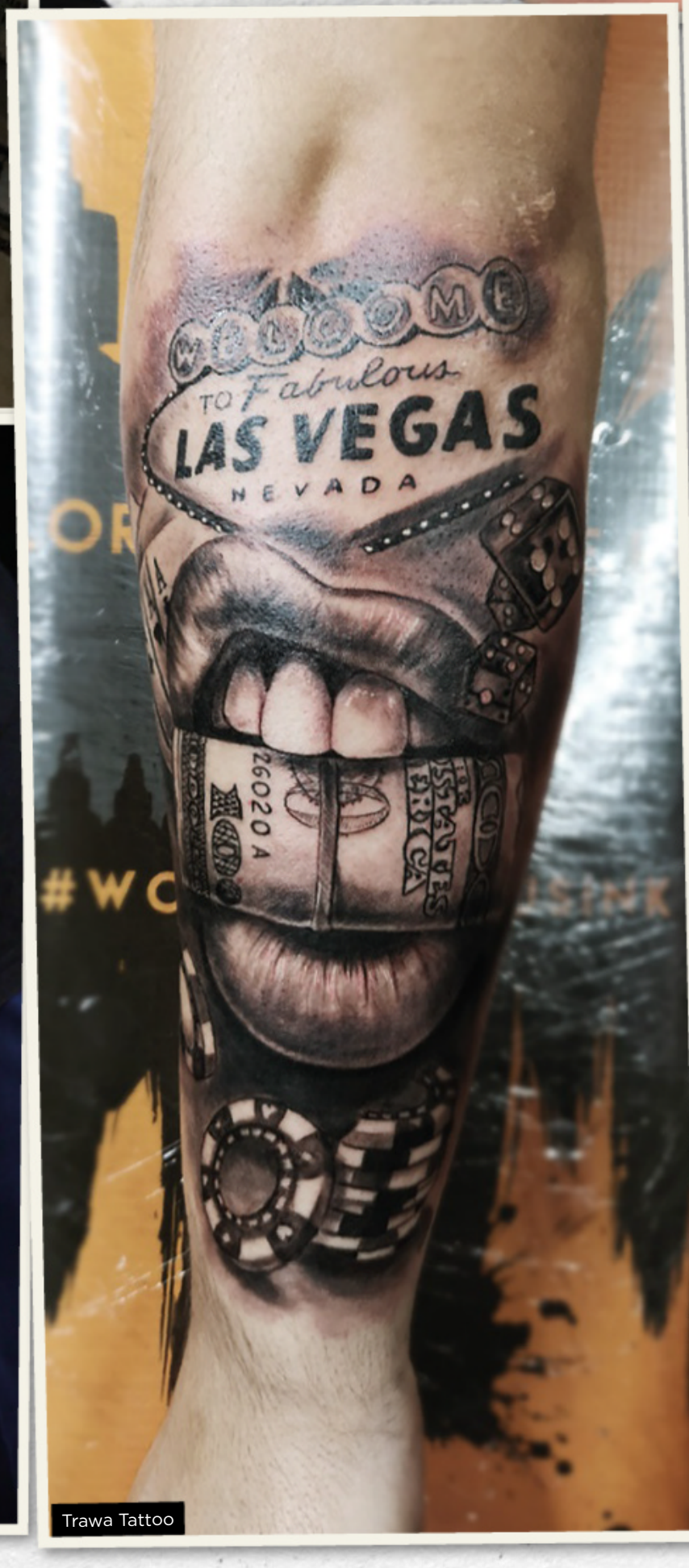
Duncan Fyfe



Juan Mellett



Matt Lewis



Trawa Tattoo


WE ALL
FLOAT
DOWN
HERE

STUDIO LISTINGS

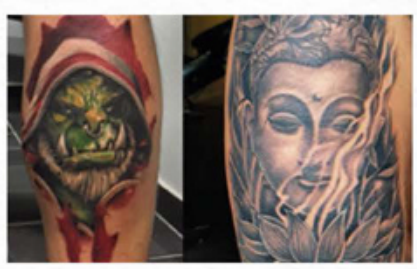
SCOTLAND
NORTHERN IRELAND
EIRE
NORTH WEST
NORTH EAST
WALES
WEST MIDLANDS
EAST MIDLANDS
SOUTH WEST
CHANNEL ISLANDS
SOUTH EAST
EAST

If you would like to be listed in the Skin Shots directory, contact Sarah on 01244 886029 or email sarah@skindeep.co.uk
Full details available on www.skindeep.co.uk/advertising

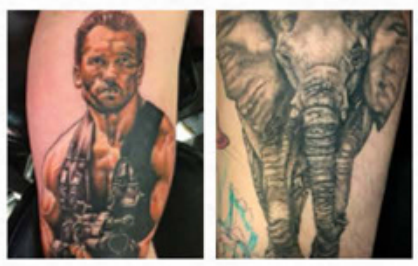
SCOTLAND



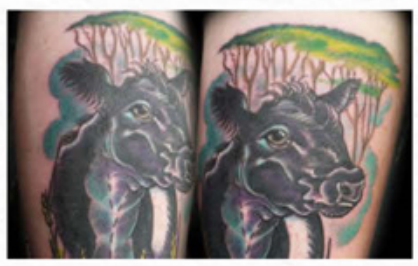
BLUE BOX - DUNFERMLINE
TEL: 01383736829 | 07837 902352



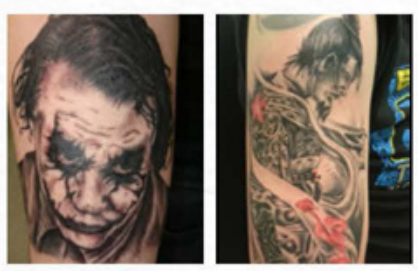
BUSHMAN INK - WHITBURN
TEL: 01501 228086 BUSHMAN INK TATTOO & PIERCING STUDIO



CREATION TATTOO - DUNFERMLINE
TEL: 01383 622912
WWW.CREATIONTATTOO.CO.UK



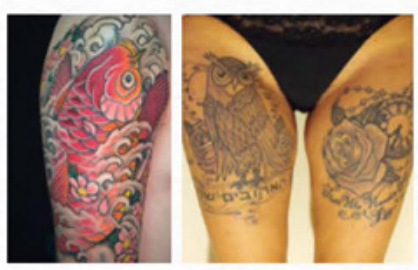
THE INK MINX - MONTROSE
TEL: 01674 678989
INK MINX TATTOOS



TJ'S TATTOO STUDIO - KILMARNOCK
TEL: 01563 551599
WWW.TJS-STUDIO.CO.UK



DARK ANGEL TATTOO STUDIO - BELFAST
TEL: 0289 022 0750
WWW.DARKANGELTATTOOS.COM



JACK'S TATTOOS - PORTADOWN
TEL: 0283 839 8790
JACKSTATTOOS PORTADOWN



JOKER TATTOO STUDIO - BELFAST
TEL: 02890 314 280 & 07803 628967
WWW.JOKERTATTOO.CO.UK

EIRE

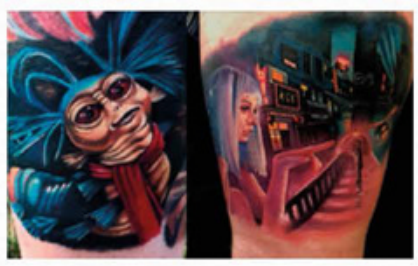


NINE LIVES - BRAY
TEL: 00353 1276 1592 NINELIVESTATTOO

NORTH WEST



INKDEN TATTOO STUDIO—BLACKPOOL
TEL: 07851366835



HELLO SAILOR—BLACKPOOL
TEL: 01253 752032
HTTP://HELLO-SAILOR.ORG/



IAN PETRIE TATTOO ARTIST
TEL: 01652 651700
WWW.TATTOOARTISTSSCUNTHORPE.CO.UK

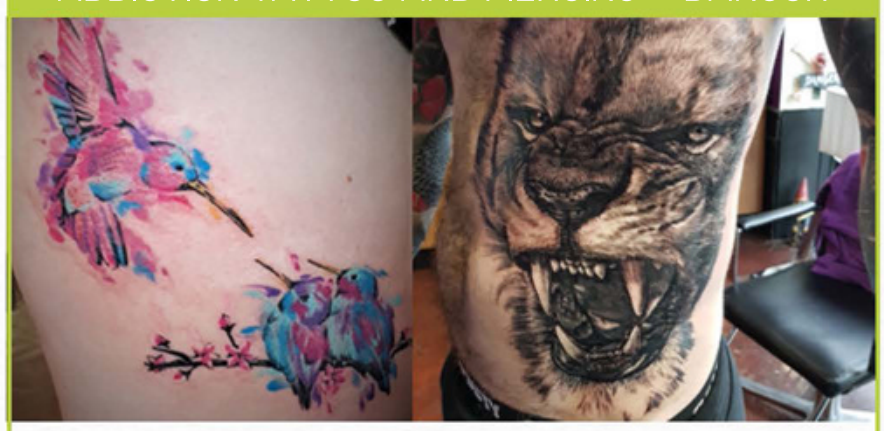


SKIN GRAFFITI • WIGAN
01942 826553
WWW.SKINGRAFFITITATTOOS.CO.UK



PARADISE TATTOOS & BODY ART STUDIO LTD - HALIFAX TEL: 01422 300920
PARADISE 2 TATTOO STUDIO

ADDICTION TATTOO AND PIERCING – BANGOR



TATTOOS BY REBEKAH, PIERCINGS BY GREG
10A QUAY STREET, BANGOR, COUNTY DOWN, BT20 5ED
TEL: 07769 532 606
EMAIL: ADDICTIONTATTOOBANGOR@GMAIL.COM
ADDICTIONTATTOOBANGOR



NAUGHTY NEEDLES - BOLTON
TEL: 01204 493529
WWW.NAUGHTYNEEDLES.CO.UK



SECOND 2 NONE - ROTHERHAM
TEL: 01709 380069 & 07879 268745
SIMON SECONDTONONE GRAYSON



SKIN FANTASY - BURNLEY
TEL: 01282 424566
WWW.SKINFANTASYBURNLEY.CO.UK

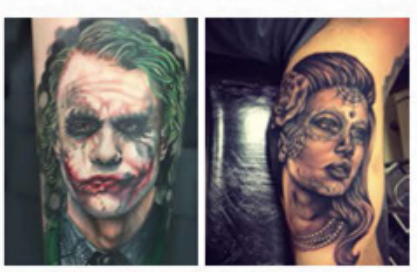


TALISMAN TATTOO ART STUDIO - YORK
TEL: 01904 636462
TALISMAN TATTOOSTUDIO

NORTH EAST



2001 AD TATTOO STUDIO - LEEDS
TEL: 0113 240 3412
WWW.2001ADTATTOODESIGN.COM



TAT2 STATION - NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
TEL: 0191 232 8491
WWW.TATTOOSTATION.CO.UK

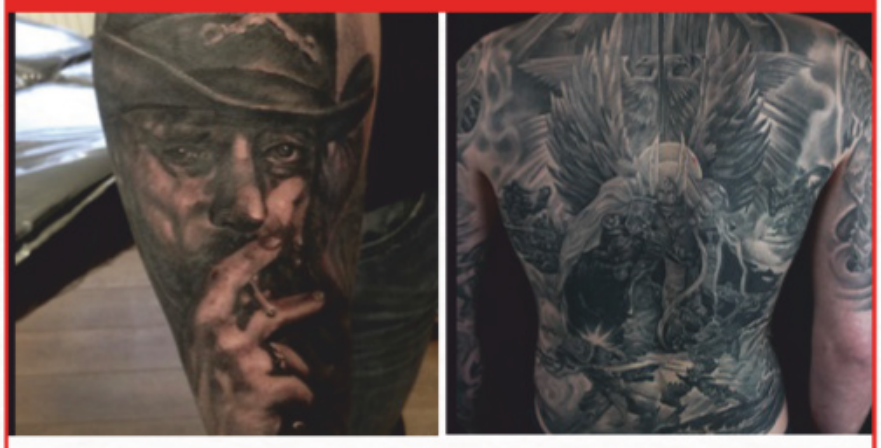
SKINZ TATTOO STUDIO — LEEDS



TATTOOS BY MR LEE. PIERCING & LASER REMOVAL BY EMMA. STATION BUILDINGS,
318-322 STANNINGLEY ROAD, BRAMLEY, LEEDS, LS13 3EG
TEL: 0113 204 7848 INFO@LEEDSTATTOOSTUDIO.COM
@SKINZSTUDIO @SKINZTATTOOSTUDIO

WWW.LEEDSTATTOOSTUDIO.COM

SOTA CUSTOM TATTOO — LLANTWIT MAJOR



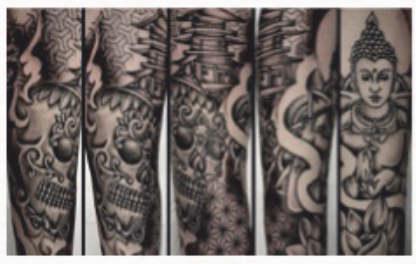
TATTOOS BY MATT FAULKNER
1A BARONS CLOSE HOUSE, EAST STREET, LLANTWIT MAJOR,
VALE OF GLAMORGAN, CF61 1XY
TEL: 01446 795785 SOTATATTOO@YAHOO.CO.UK SOTA TATTOO CO.

WWW.SOTA-INK.CO.UK

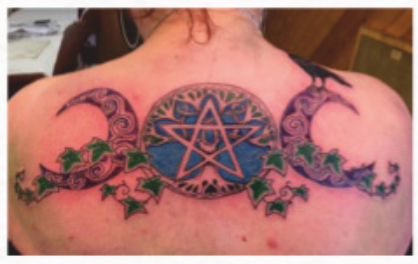
PURPLE MOON TATTOOS — CONNAHS QUAY



TATTOOS BY MICK & LUKE
78 HIGH STREET, CONNAHS QUAY, CH5 4DD
TEL: 07756 808884
PURPLEMOONTATTOOS@OUTLOOK.COM
PURPLEMOONTATTOOSHOTTON

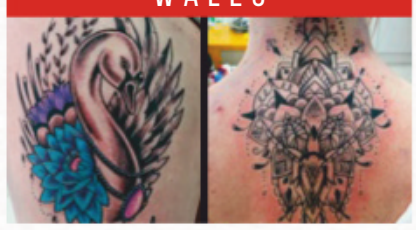


VALONIA TATTOOS - SOUTH SHIELDS
TEL: 07794 045917
WWW.VALONIATATTOOS.CO.UK

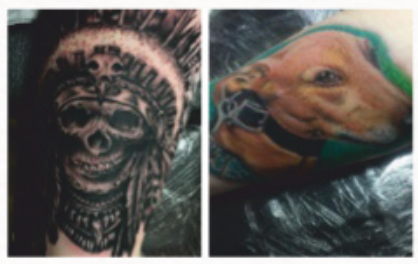


TRIBAL DRAGON TATTOO STUDIO -
ABERAERON TEL: 01545 571140
TRIBAL DRAGON TATTOO STUDIO

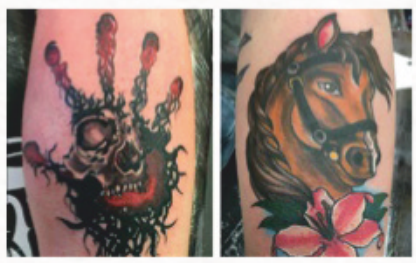
WALES



LASTING IMPRESSIONS TATTOO STUDIO
- PONTYPOOL
TEL: 07783 608782 & 01495 751337



WREXHAM INK - WREXHAM
TEL: 01978 290876
WWW.WREXHAMINK.COM

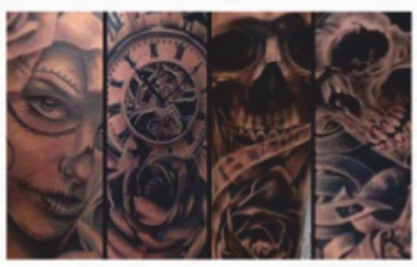


LIVING COLOUR - CWMBRAN
TEL: 01633 867676
LIVING COLOUR TATTOO

WEST MIDLANDS



BIG WILLS TATTOOS TEL: 01543898766
@ BIGWILLSTATTOOSTUDIO
WWW.BIGWILLSTATTOOS.CO.UK



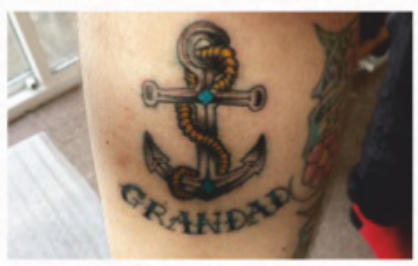
NATIVE ELEMENTS ART & TATTOO STUDIO
COVENTRY
TEL: 0771 256 5729



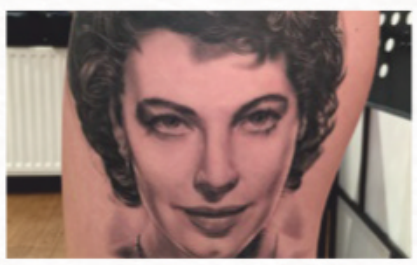
RENDITION - NUNEATON
TEL: 02476 325656
POINT MADE TATTOO-STUDIO NUNEATON



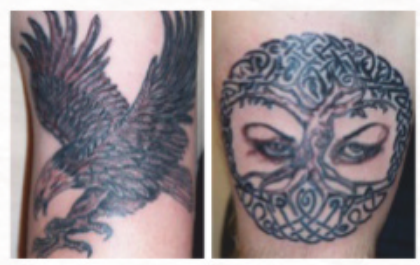
PHYSICAL GRAFFITI - CARDIFF
TEL: 0292 048 1428
WWW.PHYICALGRAFFITI.CO.UK



DERMAGRAFFIX - HALESOWEN
TEL: 0121 585 7690



OPULENT INK - WOLVERHAMPTON
TEL: 01902 424834
WWW.OPULENTINK.COM



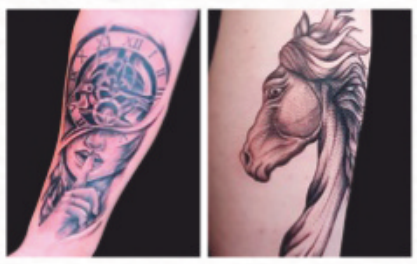
SCOTTATATTOO - WORCESTER
TEL: 01905 748818
WWW.SCOTTATATTOO.COM



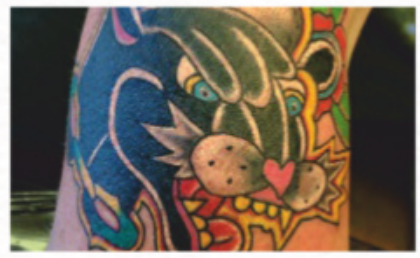
PLEASURE OR PAIN PRODUCTIONS - ABERDARE
TEL: 01685 875252
WWW.PLEASUREORPAINPRODUCTIONS.CO.UK



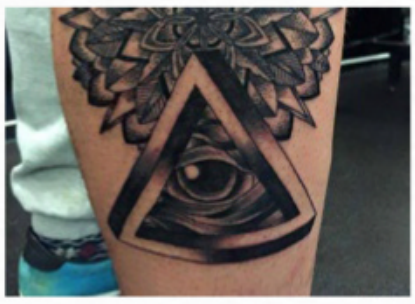
BOSSINK - TELFORD
TEL: 01952 587841
WWW.BOSSINK.CO.UK



JONNY SAUNDERS
@JONNYSAUNDERS8
WWW.JONNYSAUNDERS.COM

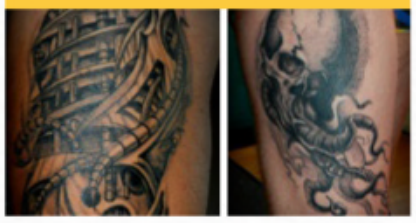


TATTOOS BY TONY - BIRMINGHAM
TEL: 0121 477 5995
WWW.TATTOOSBYTONY.CO.UK



TRIBAL IMAGES TATTOO STUDIOS - HANLEY
TEL: 01782 268691
WWW.TRIBALIMAGES.CO.UK

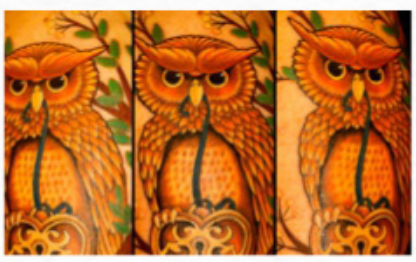
SOUTH WEST



DR FEELGOOD'S TATTOO STUDIO - POOLE
TEL: 01202 674838
WWW.DRFEELGOODS.CO.UK

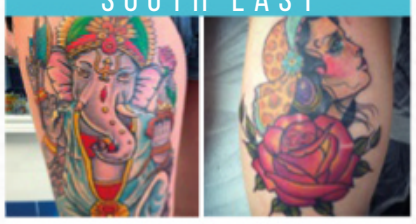


LUCKY CHARLIE TATTOOS, RANDWICK
TEL: 07725 893895

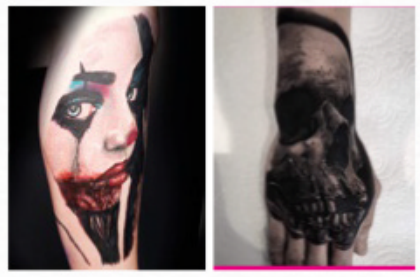


THE INK CAPTAIN'S TATTORIUM - EXETER
TEL: (01392) 200111
WWW.INKCAPTAIN.COM

SOUTH EAST



ANDY BARBER'S NEW ROSE TATTOO STUDIO
- NEW MALDEN, SURREY
WWW.ANDYBARBERSTATTOOSTUDIO.CO.UK



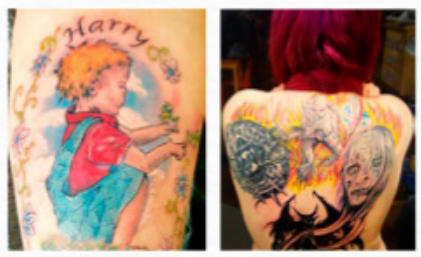
BLACK SKULL TATTOOS • HAMMERSMITH, LONDON
TEL: 02036 433836



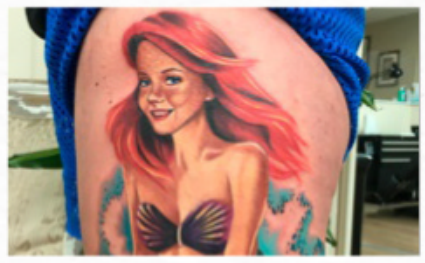
DOR STOCKER TATTOOS - BEXLEYHEATH
TEL: 02083030198
WWW.DORSTOCKERTATTOOS.COM



DIAMOND JACKS TATTOO CO - LONDON
TEL: 0207 437 0605
WWW.DIAMONDJACKS.CO.UK

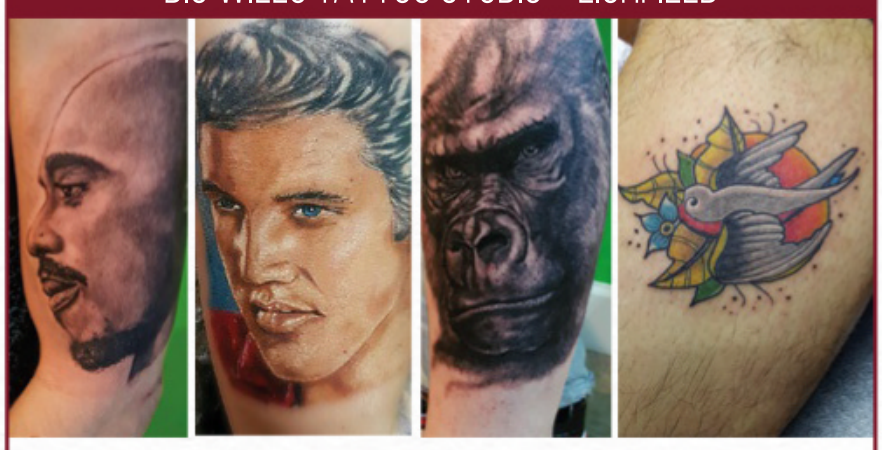


SCARRED FOR LIFE TATTOO STUDIO
CRATE 9, 15 OAKWOOD HILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
LOUGHTON • IG10 3TZ • 020 3488 3228



FIREFLY TATTOO COMPANY - EAST SUSSEX
TEL: 01323847434
WWW.FIREFLYTATTOO.CO.UK

BIG WILLS TATTOO STUDIO—LICHFIELD



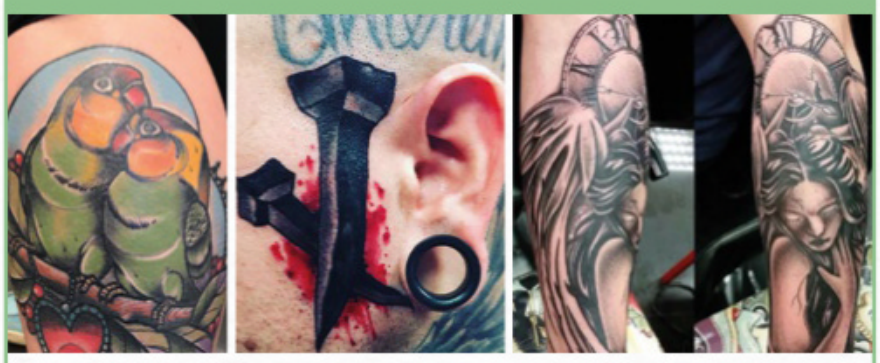
BIG WILLS TATTOO STUDIO, 15 EASTERN AVENUE
TRENT VALLEY SHOPS, LICHFIELD, WS13 6TE • TEL: 01543 898766
CRAIG@BIGWILLSTATTOOS.CO.UK
BIG WILLS TATTOO STUDIO BIGWILLSTATTOOS
WWW.BIGWILLSTATTOOS.CO.UK

COSMIC MONSTERS INCORPORATED—BROMSGROVE



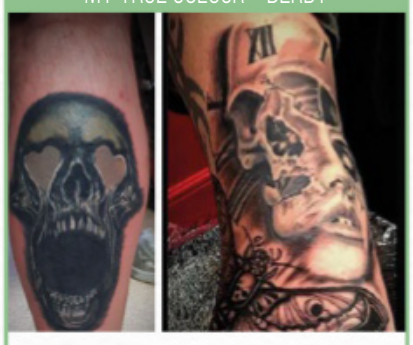
TATTOOS BY OLLIE TYE
MILTRE HOUSE, THE COURTYARD, 27 THE STRAND, BROMSGROVE, WORCESTERSHIRE
TEL: 07863 135814
OLLIETATTOO@HOTMAIL.CO.UK
COSMIC MONSTERS INCORPORATED

PULSE TATTOO & PIERCING—NORTHAMPTON



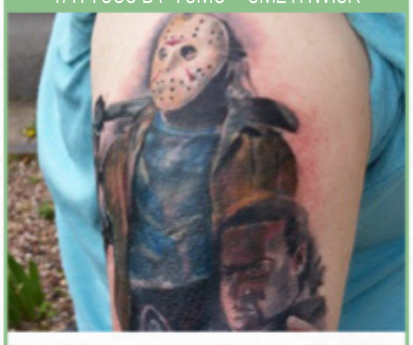
TATTOOS BY ANDY X EDGE, SIMON WALDEN & NIALL BARTON.
PIERCINGS BY CHARLII, JAMES & ALANA, 12 & 15 ST PETERS WALK, NORTHAMPTON, NN1 1PT
TEL: 01604 627228 PULSETATTOO@OUTLOOK.COM
PULSETATTOOANDPIERCING PULSETATTOOANDPIERCING
WWW.PULSE-TATTOO.CO.UK

MY TRUE COLOUR—DERBY

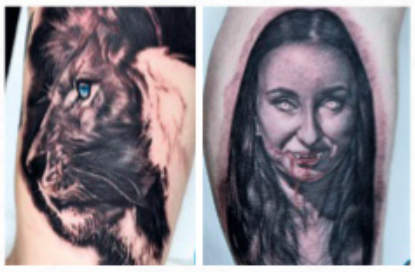


TATTOOS BY KARL ORMOND,
DEN TATTOOIST, HEATHER GRIFFIN
PIERCING BY MR. PARRIS
155 UTTOXETER NEW ROAD, DERBY, DE22 3NP
TEL: 01332 492059
INFO@MTCSTUDIO.CO.UK
MYTRUECOLOURTATTOOSTUDIO

TATTOOS BY TOMO—SMETHWICK



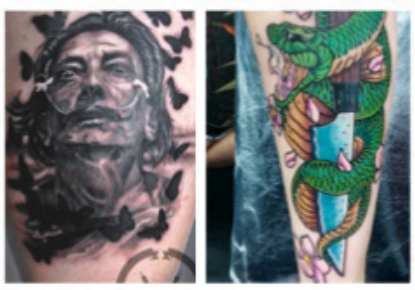
TATTOOING & PIERCING BY TOMO, STEVE
& ROB. LASER REMOVAL AVAILABLE
107 THREE SHIRES OAK ROAD,
SMETHWICK, WEST MIDLANDS, B67 5BT
TEL: 0121 429 1566
TATTOOSBYTOMO@LIVE.CO.UK
WWW.TATTOOSBYTOMO.COM



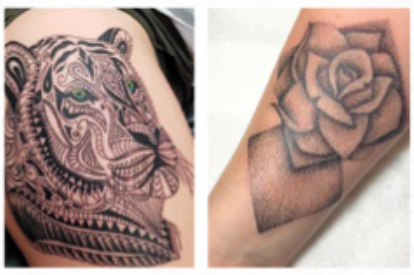
INKLECTIC TATTOO, LONDON
TEL: 02073 544888



INKSPIRATIONZ
110 RUISLIP ROAD • UB6 9QH GREENFORD
020 8575 5280 • INKSPIRATIONZ.CO.UK



INK FACT - HACKNEY, LONDON
TEL: 02085 333334
WWW.INKFACTTATTOO.COM



MARLOW TATTOO LOUNGE
TEL: 01628 473979
MARLOWTATTOOLOUNGE



@DEADMANSTATTS
DEADMANSTATTS.CO.UK • 01303254958



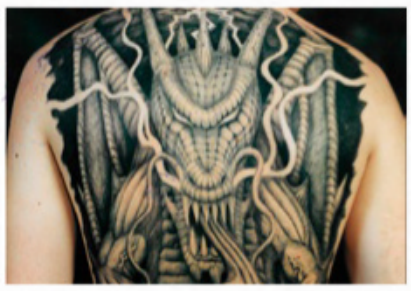
METTLE NETTLE TATTOO AND PIERCING
STUDIO TEL: 01245600133
WWW.JEFFWHARNSBY.CO.UK



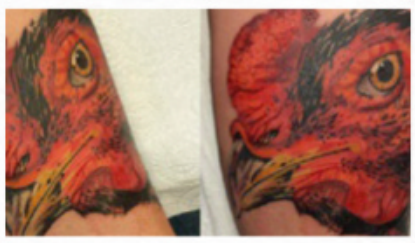
OUCH TATTOOS - ESSEX, TEL: 01992 711917
WWW.OUCHTATTOOSTUDIO.CO.UK



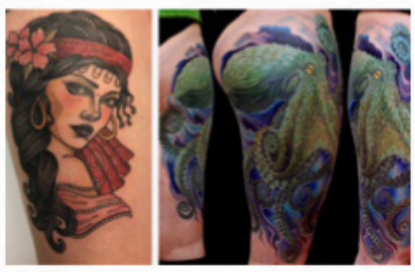
OLD LONDON ROAD TATTOOS - KINGSTON
UPON THAMES TEL: 0208 549 4705
WWW.OLDLONDONROAD.CO.UK



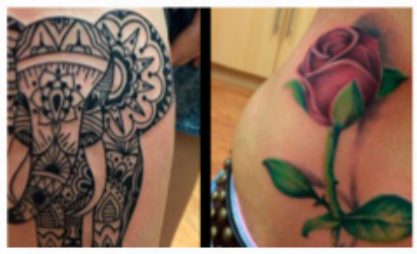
PAIN DIVINE - CROYDON
TEL: 0208 686 6136
WWW.PAINDIVINE.CO.UK



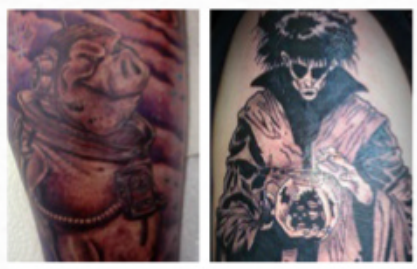
PHOENIX RISING - CHESHAM
TEL: 01494 792392
WWW.PHOENIXRISINGTATTOOSHOP.COM



PARADISO CUSTOM TATTOO & PIERCING
LONDON TEL: 07952 633736
PARADISOCUSTOMTATTOO/



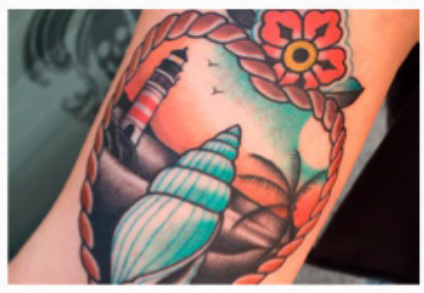
TATTOO STUDIO 149 - LONDON
TEL: 020 8544 0304
TATTOO STUDIO 149



WOODY'S TATTOO STUDIO - HIGH WYCOMBE
TEL: 01494 464023
WWW.WOODYSTATTOOSTUDIO.COM

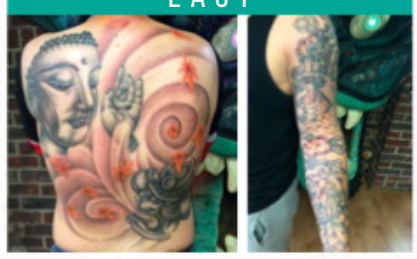


SAMMY KENT • POINT 2 POINT
13 PIER ROAD, ERITH, KENT DA8 1TA
01322 341011 • @STARTATTOOIST

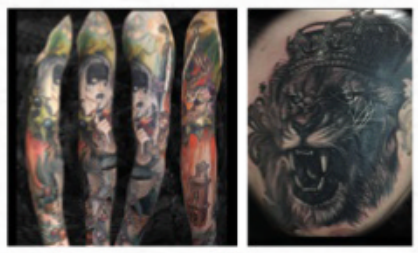


UNDERGROUND TATTOOS & PIERCING - WATFORD
TEL: 01923 288447
WWW.UNDERGROUNDTATTOOS.CO.UK

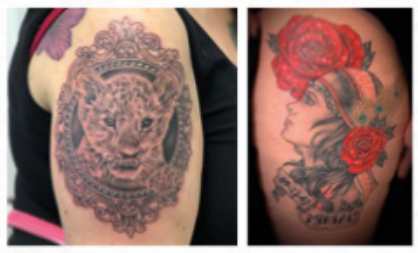
EAST



THE INK ROOM TATTOO STUDIO
WICKHAM MARKET • TEL: 01728748125
WWW.THEINKROOMTATTOOSTUDIO.CO.UK



VIVAMORTA • ART BY STEPH FINNOLA REED
VIVAMORTA • ABRAKADAVRA TATTOO
STUDIO IPSWICH
VIVAMORTATAXIDERMY@GMAIL.COM



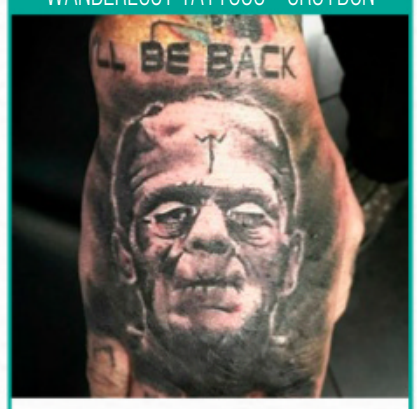
DEVANEY TATTOOS • LEIGHANNE DEVANEY
01362693333 • WWW.DEVANEYTATTOOS.CO.UK
DEVANEY TATTOOS • DEVANEY_TATTOOS

TRUE WILL TATTOOS—DORKING



TRUE WILL TATTOOS
5-6 BEARE GREEN COURT
OLD HORSHAM ROAD, BEARE GREEN
RH54SL 07896 298833
TATTOOING BY DEE, SOPHIE AND ROSIE.
PIERCING BY GEMMA. TUES-SAT 10-5
AND WE ARE AN ALL FEMALE STUDIO

WANDERLUST TATTOOS—CROYDON



TEL: 02034905978
WWW.WANDERLUSTTATTOO.CO.UK

PIERCING & OTHER

jenny·clarke·design
QUALITY TATTOO DESIGNS

JENNY CLARKE DESIGN • TEL: 01509 264 110
WWW.JENNYCLARKEDESIGN.COM

STUDIO 69 TATTOO & PIERCING—LONDON





TATTOOS BY DESMOND BYRNE, STEFAN KYRIACOU & NICO LANIO
PIERCINGS BY RUTH & ALEX
LASER TATTOO REMOVAL ALSO AVAILABLE TEL: 0208 531 4947
6 CHINGFORD RD, WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON, E17 4PJ • STUDIO 69 TATTOO AND PIERCING

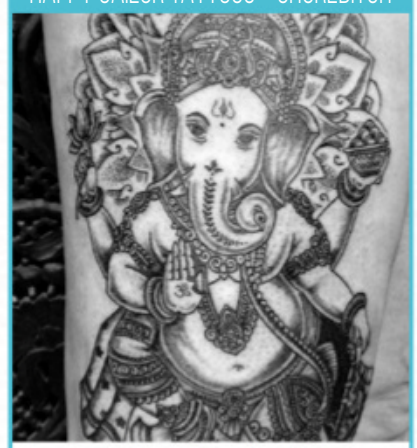
WWW.STUDIO69TATTOO-PIERCING.CO.UK

NUTZ TATTOO & PIERCING STUDIO—WARE



TATTOOS BY NUTZ & JACKIE. PIERCING
BY JACKIE TEL: 01920 469721
27 CHURCH STREET, WARE,
HERTFORDSHIRE, SG12 9EH
WWW.NUTZTATTOO.COM
NUTZ TATTOO

HAPPY SAILOR TATTOOS—SHOREDITCH



TATTOOS BY - TOTA, JAMES & TOBY
PIERCINGS BY TOTA, MANAGER: SHANE
17 HACKNEY ROAD, SHOREDITCH
LONDON, E2 7NX TEL: 020 7033 9222
HAPPY SAILOR TATTOO
WWW.HAPPYSAILORTATTOO.COM

TATTOO OF THE MONTH

by Steven Mostyn



Surveying the wealth of tattoos in the inbox this month, we kept coming back to this for our last page and did a little beard scratching because Mr Mostyn has been featured on this page before... should we/shouldn't we push him again? We decided that Hell Yeah was a good answer because when a tattoo stands out, it stands out regardless.

We say a lot about tattoos around here—of course we do—but sometimes a tattoo can 'catch a wave' and it's the spirit of this that caught our eye. If you went into a shop looking for a tattoo that described your spirit and lust for freedom, this caught that wave right between its teeth.

In what's actually a very simple design, we think you'd be hard pressed to pull something out of the bag as individual as this and have it work for you and you alone. There's more life in this small tattoo than in most work we see and today, that works for us a whole lot.

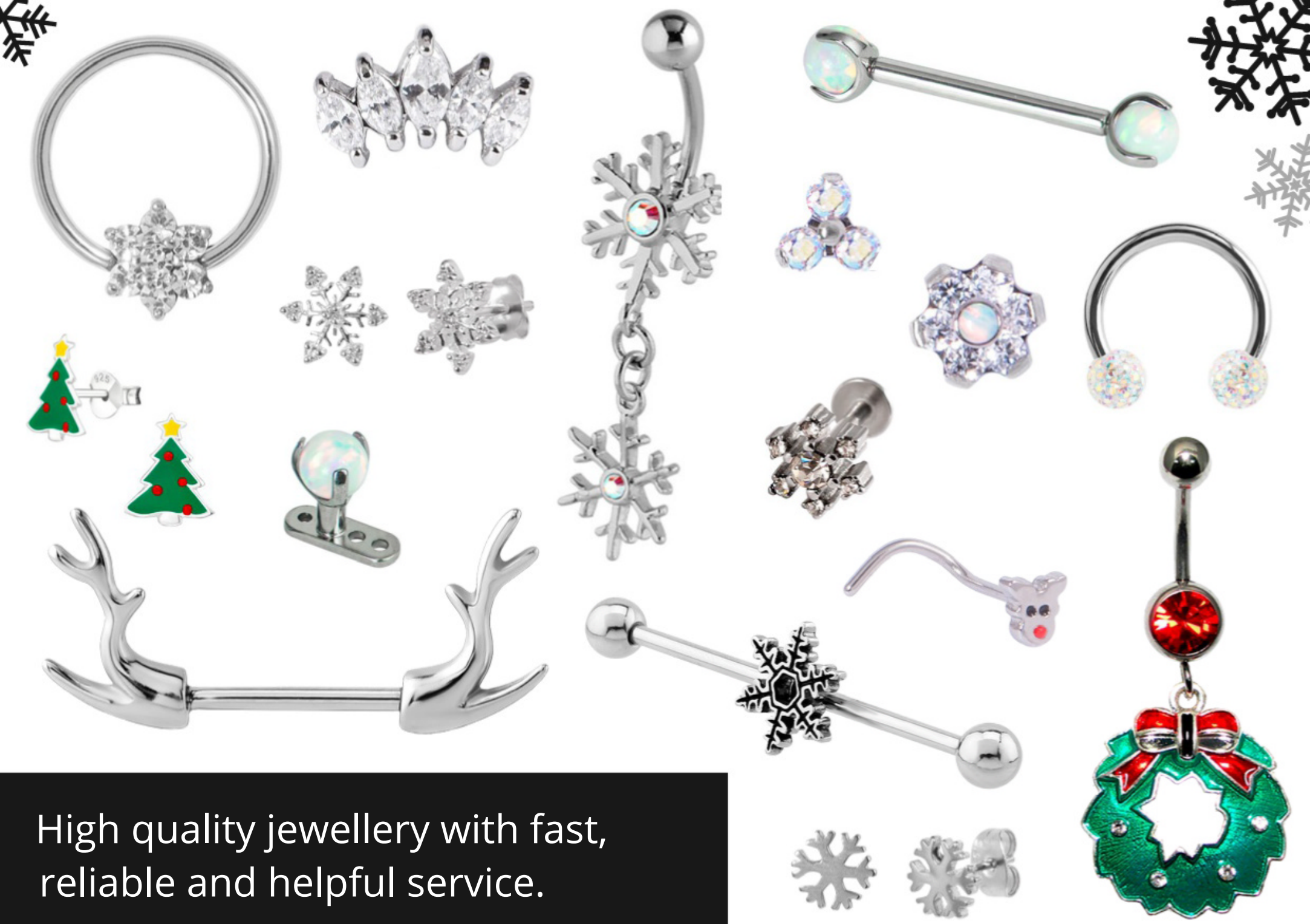
This is a fine example of telling an artist what you're after and leaving them to do what they do best.

mandm-tattoo.com
memories_and_mischief_tattoo
info@mandm-tattoo.com

TDi

www.bodyjewellery.co.uk

Wholesale Specialists Since 1997



High quality jewellery with fast, reliable and helpful service.

- **FREE Next Day Delivery** On Orders Over £125
- **10% OFF** Your 1st Online Trade Order
- 1st Minimum Order Only £75. Then No Limits After That!

TDi Body Jewellery Ltd

info@bodyjewellery.co.uk +44 (0)141 332 5900

Join us!

STARR



Don’t be a Scrooge!
Give the gift of ink
this Christmas.

5000+ PRODUCTS • FREE DELIVERY • STRICTLY PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

WWW www.starrtattoo.com @starrtattoosupplies

Starr Tattoo Supplies 1 Meir Road, Redditch, B98 7SY